THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE

BEING A TRANSLATION WITH NOTES OF THE KITAB AL-'ILM OF AL-GHAZZALI'S IHYA' 'ULUM AL-DIN

BY

NABIH AMIN FARIS

American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebnon.

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PREFACE

This work would not have been possible without the imaginative help of three Princeton scholars: the late Edwin E. Conklin, the great American biologist, the late Harold H. Bender, the great linguistic scholars and philologist, and my own teacher, mentor, colleague and friend, the leading Arab historian Philip K. Hitti. When the work was first started, in 1936, Professor Conklin was a retired scholar actively directing the affairs of the American in Philadelphia. Professor Bender was then Chairman of the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures at Princeton University and the chief etymologist of Webster's International Dictionary. Dr. Hitti was Professor of Semitic Languages at Princeton University and the moving spirit for the development of Arab studies in the United States of America.

The idea of preparing a translation of the *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* of al-Ghazzali originated with Professor Hitti. Professor Bender enthusiastically supported it; and Professor Conklin, in spite of his primary interest in biology, appreciated the importance of the work and got the Society to support it, although the Society's exclusive domain was hitherto the natural sciences. To all of these gentleman and to the Society, I am greatly indebted. Without them I could not have had the intimate company of abu-Hamid for four long years.

In preparing the translation, use was made of four texts; three printed and one in manuscript form. The printed ones are: the first is the text printed at Kafr al-Zaghari in A.H. 1352 from the older Cairo edition of A.H. 1289; it is referred to the notes as 'C'. The second is

that contained in the text of the *Ithaf al-Sadah al-Muttaqin bi-Sharh Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din;* it is referred to in the notes as SM (text). The third is the text which is reproduced in the margin of the same *Ithaf al-Sadah*; it is referred to in the notes as SM (margin). The fourth and perhaps the most important is th: text contained in a four-volume manuscript at the Princeton University Library (Philip Hitti, Nabih Amin Faris, and Butrus Abd-al-Malik, *Descriptive Catalog of the Garrett Collection of Arabic Manuscript in the Princeton University Library*, Princeton 1938, No. 1481). It consists of 525 folios; 34.1x27.6 cm.; written surface 27.8x21.5 cm.; 31 lines at a page; on glazed oriental paper; in naskhi; with catchwords; entires in red; with illumination. It probably dates from the late fifteenth century. This text, called 'B' in the notes, corresponds to SM (text), while 'C' corresponds to SM (margin). In the translation of Qur'anic verses, I depended on J.M. Rodwell's version.

It is my hope that by making this important work availabl:, in English, non-Arabic-speaking scholars will draw a benefit even from my mistakes.

The Second World War forced the work to be placed in an "ice-box". It might have stayed there indefinitely were it not for the interest of Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, sponsor of the *Islamic Literature* and devoted friend of all Islamic studies. To him I am indeed grateful.

The manuscript was greatly improved by the close and thorough reading of two of my students: Mr. Robert Hazo and Mr. John Dudley Woodberry. To both I extend my thanks.

Nabih Amin Faris

American University of Beirut
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INTRODUCTION

What the Apostle gives you, take; and
What he forbids, from it desist."[1]

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

First, I praise Allah, continuously, though the praise of the fervent does not do justice to His glory.

Second, I invoke the blessing of Allah upon His Apostle, the lord of mankind, as well as upon the other messengers.

Third, I ask His help having resolved to write a book on the revival[2] of the religious sciences.

Fourth, I proceed to enlighten you, who are the most self-righteous of those who reject belief, and you, who are the most immoderate of the thoughtless unbelievers.

I am no longer obliged to remain silent, because the responsibility to speak, as well as warn you, has been imposed upon me by your persistent straying from the clear truth, and by your insistence upon fostering evil, flattering ignorance, and stirring up opposition against him who, in order to conform to the dictates of knowledge, deviates from custom and the established practice of men. In doing this he fulfils God's prescriptions for purifying the self and reforming the heart, thus somewhat redeeming a life, which has already been dissipated in despair of prevention and remedy, and avoids by it the company of him whom the Law giver (Muhammad

1. *Surah* LIX: 7
2. Arabic *ihya* has been rendered *revivification*. I prefer *revival*.

S.A.W.) described when he said, (2) "The most severely punished of all men on the day of resurrection will be a learned man whom Allah has not blessed with His knowledge."[1] For, by my life, there is no reason for your abiding arrogance except the malady which has become an epidemic among the multitudes. That malady consists in not discerning this matter's importance, the gravity of the problem, and the seriousness of the crisis; in not seeing that life is waning and that what is to come is close at hand, that death is imminent but that the journey is still long, that the provisions are scanty, the dangers great, and the road blocked. The perceptive know that only knowledge and works devoted to God avail.

To tread the crowded and dangerous path of the hereafter with neither guide nor companion is difficult, tiring, and strenuous. The guides for the road are the learned men who are the heirs of the Prophet, but the times are void of them now and only the superficial are left, most of whom have been lured by iniquity and overcome by Satan. Everyone of them was so wrapped up in his immediate fortune that he came to see good as evil and evil as good, so that the science of religion disappeared and the torch of the true faith was extinguished all over the world. They duped the people into believing that there was no knowledge except such ordinances of government as the judges use to settle disputes when the mob riots; or the type of argument which the vainglorious displays in order to confuse and refute; or the elaborate and flowery language with which the preacher seeks to lure the common folk. They did this, because apart from these three, they could find no other ways to snare illegal profit and gain the riches of the world. On the other hand the science of the path of the hereafter, which our forefathers trod and which includes what Allah in His Book called law, wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment, light, guidance, and righteousness, has vanished from among men and been completely forgotten. Since this is a calamity afflicting religion and a grave crisis overshadowing it, I have therefore deemed it important to engage in

1. *Cf.* al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Saghir* (Delhi, 1311), p. 103; Abu-Nu'aym al-Isfahani, *Hikayat al-Awliya' wa-Tabaqat al-Asfiya'* (Cairo, 1351), Vol. I, p. 223.

the writing of this book; to revive the science of religion, to bring to light the exemplary lives of the departed *imams*, and to show what branches of knowledge the prophets and the virtuous fathers regarded as useful.

I have divided the work into four parts or quarters. These are: the Acts of Worship, the Usages of Life, the Destructive Matters in Life, and the Saving Matters in Life. I have begun the work with the book of knowledge because it is of the utmost importance to determine first of all the knowledge which Allah has, through His Apostle, ordered the elite to seek. This is shown by the words of the Apostle of Allah when he said, "Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory upon every Muslim."[1] Furthermore, I have begun with the book on knowledge in order to distinguish between useful and harmful knowledge, as the Prophet said, "We seek refuge in Allah from useless knowledge;"[2] and also to show the deviation of the people of this age from right conduct, their delusion as by a glistening mirage, and their satisfaction with the husks of knowledge rather than the pith.

The quarter on the Acts of Worship comprises ten books:

1. The Book of Knowledge
2. The Articles of Faith
3. The Mysteries of Purity
4. The Mysteries of Prayer
5. The Mysteries of Almsgiving
6. The Mysteries of Fasting
7. The Mysteries of the Pilgrimage
8. The Rules of Reading the Qur'an
9. On Invocations and Supplications
10. On the Office of Portions.

1. Ibn-Majah, *Sunan al-Mustafa*, Intro., 17:5, al Baghawi, *Masabih al-Sunnah*, (Cairo, 1318), Vol. I, p. 15.
2. Ibn-Majah, Intro., 23:1.

The quarter on Usages of Life comprises ten books:

1. The Ethics of Eating
2. The Ethics of Marriage
3. The Ethics of Earning a Livelihood
4. On the Lawful and the Unlawful
5. The Ethics of Companionship and Fellowship with the Various Types of Men
6. On Seclusion
7. The Ethics of Travel
8. On Audition and Grief
9. On Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil
10. The Ethics of Living as Exemplified in the Virtues of the Prophet.

The quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life comprises ten books:

1. On the Wonders of the Heart
2. On the Discipline of the Soul
3. On the Curse of the Two Appetites — the Appetite of the Stomach and the Appetite of Sex
4. The Curse of the Tongue
5. The Curse of Anger, Rancour, and Envy
6. The Evil of the World[1]
7. The Evil of Wealth and Avarice
8. The Evil of Pomp and Hypocrisy
9. The Evil of Pride and Conceit
10. The Evils of Vanity.

The quarter on the Saving Matters of Life comprises ten books:

1. On Repentance

1. Nos. 5 and 6 are in reverse order in B.

2. On Patience and Gratitude
3. On Fear and Hope
4. On Poverty and Asceticism
5. On Divine Unity and Dependance
6. On Love, Longing, Intimacy[1] and Contentment
7. On Intentions, Truthfulness, and Sincerity
8. On Self-Examination and Self-Accounting
9. On Meditation
10. On Death.

In the quarter on the Acts of Worship I shall mention some of the hidden (elements) of its etiquette, the niceties of its rules, and the mysteries of its meanings. (These), the active learned man badly needs; without their knowledge no one will be versed in the science of the hereafter. Most of this information has been neglected in theological studies.

In the quarter on the Usage of Life I shall deal with the rules of practical religion current among men, its deep mysteries, intricate technique, and the piety concealed in its rules of conduct, which no religious man can do without.

In the quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life I shall enumerate every abhorred trait whose exposure the Qur'an has ordered, as well as dealing with the purifying of the soul and the cleansing of the heart therefrom. Under every one of these traits I shall give its definition, the truth about it, its origin, its evil consequences, its symptoms, and finally its treatment. To all this will be added illustrations from the Qur'an tradition, and antiquity.

In the quarter on the Saving Matters of Life, I shall enumerate every praiseworthy trait and every one of the desirable qualities of Allah's favourites (*al-muqarrabun*) and the saints, by means of which the slave seeks to draw near to the Lord of the Universe. Similarly, under every quality I shall give its definition, the truth

1. Only in C.

about it, its origin, its fruit, the sign by which it is known, its excellence which renders it desirable, together with examples to illustrate it from [the fields of] law and reason.

It is true that men have written several works on some of these aspects, but this one differs from them in five ways:

First, by clarifying what they have obscured and elucidating what they have treated casually.

Second, by arranging what they have disarranged, and organizing what they have scattered.

Third, by condensing what they have elaborated, and correcting what they have approved.

Fourth, by deleting what they have repeated (and verifying what they have set[1] down).

Fifth, by determining ambiguous matters which have hitherto been unintelligible and never dealt with in any work. For although all have followed one course, there is no reason why one should not proceed independently and bring to light something unknown, paying special attention to what his colleagues have forgotten. It is possible that such obscure things are noticed, but mention of them in writing is overlooked. Or again it may not be a case of overlooking them, but rather one of being prevented from exposing them.

These, therefore, are the characteristics of this work which comprises the aggregate of the (previously enumerated) sciences. Two things have induced me to divide the work into four quarters. The first and original motive is that such an arrangement in research and exposition is imperative because the science by which we approach the hereafter is divided into the science of revelation I mean knowledge and only knowledge. By the science of practical religion I mean knowledge as well as action in accordance with that knowledge. This work will deal only with the science of practical religion, and not with revelation, which one is not permitted to record in writing,

1. Words between brackets only in C.

although it is the ultimate aim of saints and the desire of the eyes of the *Sincere*. The science of practical religion is merely a path which leads to revelation and only through their path did the prophets of God communicate with the people and lead them to Him. Concerning revelation itself, the prophets spoke only figuratively and briefly through signs and symbols, because they realized the inability of man's mind to comprehend. Therefore since the learned men are heirs of the prophets, they cannot but follow in their footsteps and emulate their way.

Furthermore, the science of practical religion is divided into outward science, by which is meant that of the functions of the senses, and inward science, by which is meant that of the functions of the heart The bodily organs perform either acts of worship or usages of life, while the heart, because it is removed from the senses and belongs to the world of dominion,[1] is subject to either praiseworthy or blameworthy (influences). Inevitably, therefore, this science divides itself into two parts — outward and inward. The outward, which pertains to the senses, is subdivided into acts of worship and usages of life; the inward, which relates to the conditions of the heart and the qualities of the soul, is subdivided into things which are praiseworthy and things which are objectionable. Together these constitute the four parts of the science of practical religion, a classification objected to by none.

My second motive for adopting this division is that I have noticed that the interests of students in jurisprudence (which has, for the sake of boasting and exploiting its influence and prestige in arguments, become popular among those who do not fear God) is genuine. It also is divided into quarters.[2] And since he who dresses as the beloved will also be beloved, I am not far wrong in deeming that the modelling of this book after books of jurisprudence will prove to be a clever move in creating interest in it. For this (same) reason, one of those who (4) wanted to attract the attention of the authorities to

1. Ar. *'alam-al-malakut*; it denotes the Attributes as opposed to *'alam al-jabarut* (the world of almightiness), which denotes the Essence.
2. I.e The Qur'an, the *sunnah*, catholic consent, and analogy.

(the science of) medicine, modelled it after astronomical lists, arranging it in tables and numbers, and called (his book) Tables of Health.[1] He did this in order that their interest in that (latter) type (of study) might help in drawing them to read it. Ingenuity in drawing hearts to the science which is good for spiritual life is, however, more important than that of interesting them in medicine which benefits nothing but physical health. The fruit of this science is the treatment of the hearts and souls through which is obtained a life that will persist for ever and ever. How inferior, then, is the medicine of the body, which is of necessity destined to decay before long. Therefore we beg Allah for help to (lead us to) the right path and (the way of truth, verily He is the Generous, the all Bounteous.

1. This undoubtedly refers to Taqwim al-Abdan of Ibn-Jazlah (A.H. 493/ A.D. 1100). See ibn-Khallikan *Wafayat al-A'yan wa-Anba' Abna' al-Zaman* (Cairo, 1299), Vol. III, pp. 2556; *ibn-abi Usaybi'ah, 'Uyun al-Anba' fi Tabaqat al-Atibba'* (Cairo, 1299), Vol. I, p. 255. A similar but earlier work is that of bin-Butian (A.H. 455/A.D 1063) entitled *Taqwim al-Sihhah*; see ibn-abi-Usaybi'ah, Vol. I, pp. 241-3. It is more likely that the author had in mind the former work since ibn-Jazlah was this close contempoary.

BOOK I

THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE COMPRISING SEVEN SECTIONS

The Book of Knowledge comprises seven sections:

1. On the value of knowledge, instruction, and learning.
2. On the branches of knowledge which are *fard 'ayn*;[1] on the branches of knowledge which are *fard kifayah*;[2] on the definition of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*kalam*) as disciplines in the science of religion; and on the science of the hereafter and that of this world.
3. On what is popularly considered to be part of the science of religion, but is really not, including a discussion on the nature of blameworthy knowledge.
4. On the defects of debate and the reasons why people have engaged in dissension and disputation.
5. On the proprieties of the teacher and the student.
6. On the deficiency of knowledge, the drawbacks of the learned, and the characteristics distinguishing the scholars of the science of the hereafter from those of the science of this world.
7. On reason, its value, categories and what has been said concerning it in Traditions.

1. Divinely ordained, and binding for every individual Muslim.
2. Divinely ordained and binding for the Muslim community as a whole. Therefore this collective obligation can be discharged for the community by the action of some, and is not necessarily binding for each individual member.

SECTION 1

On the Value of Knowledge, Instruction, and Learning together with its evidence in tradition and from reason.

The excellence of knowledge The evidence for the excellence of knowledge in the Qur'an is manifest in the words of God: "God bears witness that there is no god but He, and the angels, and men endued with knowledge, established in righteousness."[1] See, then, how God has mentioned Himself first, the angels second, and men endowed with knowledge third. In this you really have honour, excellence, distinction and rank. And again God said: "God will raise in rank those of you who believe as well as those who are given knowledge."[2] According to ibn-'Abbas[3] the learned men rank seven hundred grades above the believers; between each two of which is a distance five hundred years long. Said God, "Say, 'shall those who know be deemed equal with those who do not?'"[4] God also said, "None fear God but the wise among His servants;"[5] and again, "Say, 'God is witness enough betwixt me and you, and whoever hath the knowledge of The Book!'"[6] This I mention to you in order to show that it was possible only through the power of knowledge. God also said, "But they to whom knowledge hath been given said, 'Woe to you! The reward of God is better [for him who believes and does right],'"[7] showing thereby that the great importance of the hereafter is appreciated through knowledge. And again God said, "These parables do we set forth for men: and none understands them save

1. *Surah* III: 16.
2. *Surah* LVIII:12.
3. 'Abdullah, cousin of the Prophet; d. A.H. 68/A.D. 687-88. See *al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* (Hyderabad, 1333) Vol. I, p. 37.
4. *Surah* XXXIX: 12.
5. *Surah* XXXV:25.
6. *Surah* XIII: 43.
7. *Surah* XXVIII: 80.

those who know."[1] God also said, "But if they were to refer it to the Apostle and to those in authority amongst them, those of them who would elicit the information would know it"[2] He thus made the knowledge of His will dependent upon their efforts to find it out, and placed them next to the prophets in the ability to make it known. It has been said that in the following words of God, "O Sons of Adam! We have sent down to you raiments wherewith to cover your nakedness, and splendid garments; but the raiment of piety — this is best,"[3] the raiments represent knowledge, the splendid garments, truth, and the raiment of piety, modesty. God also said, "And We have brought them a book: with knowledge have We explained it;"[4] and again, "But it is clear sign in the hearts of those whom the knowledge hath reached;"[5] and, "With knowledge will We tell them;"[6] and again, "[He] hath created man, [and] hath taught him articulate speech."[7] This, however, He said reproachfully.

As to the evidence of the value of knowledge in tradition (*al-akhbar*) the Apostle of God said, "Whom God doth love, He giveth knowledge of religion and guideth him into the straight path;"[8] and again, "The learned men are the heirs of the prophets."[9] It is also well-known that there is no rank above that of prophethood, no honour higher than its inheritance. The Prophet also said, "What is in the heavens and in the earth intercedes for the learned men."[10] And what rank is higher than that of him for whom the angels of the heavens and earth labour interceding with God on his behalf, while he is preoccupied with himself. Muhammad also said, "Wisdom adds honour to the noble and exalts the slave until he attains the level of kings." The Prophet pointed this out relating to the benefits of wisdom in this world, since it is well-known that the hereafter is superior and more lasting. Muhammad said again, "Two qualities the hypocrite lacks — good intentions and religious insight."[11] Do

1. *Surah* XXIX: 42.
2. *Surah* IV: 85.
3. *Surah* VII: 25,
4. *Surah* VII: 50.
5. *Surah* XXIX: 48.
6. *Surah* VII: 6.
7. *Surah* LV 2,3.
8. *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 17: 1; *cf. al-Bukhari*, 'Ilm, 14.
9. See, *supra*, p.2.
10. *Masabih*, Vol. I, p. 14; cf; *ibn-Majah*, Intro., 17:4,20:1,
11. *Masabih* Vol. I, p. 15; al-*Tirmidhi*, *Sahih*, 'Ilm, 19.

not doubt tradition, then, because of the hypocrisy of some contemporary jurisprudents; theirs is not the jurisprudence which the Prophet had in mind. (The definition of jurisprudence will come later). For a jurisprudent to know that the hereafter is better than this world is, after all, the lowest type of knowledge he can possess. Should it prove to be true and prevail, it would clear him of hypocrisy and deceit. The Prophet said, "The best of men is the learned believer who, if he is needed, he will be useful; and if dispensed with, he will be self-sufficient." And again he said, "Belief is like unto a nude who should be clothed with piety, ornamented with modesty and should have knowledge for progeny." And again, "The nearest people to prophethood are the people of knowledge and the warriors of *jihad*:" the former have led men to what the prophets have proclaimed, and the latter have wielded their swords on its behalf. He also said, "The passing away of a whole tribe is more tolerable than the death of one learned man." And again, "Men are like ores of gold and silver, the choicest among them during the *Jahiliyah* days are also the best during the days of Islam, provided they see the light."[1] He also said, "On the day of resurrection the ink of the learned men will be likened to the blood of the martyrs." And again, "Whoever preserves of the law forty Traditions in order to transmit them unto my people, I shall, on the day of resurrection, be an intercessor and a witness on his behalf." Muhammad also said, "Any one of my people who will preserve forty hadiths will on the day of resurrection face God as a learned jurisprudent." And again, "Whoever will become versed in the religion of God, God will relieve him of his worries and will reward him whence he does not reckon" The Prophet also said, "God said unto Abraham, 'O Abraham! Verily I am knowing and I love every knowing person'." And again, "The learned man is the trustee of God on earth." The Prophet said, "There are two groups among my people who when they become righteous the populace becomes righteous, and when they become corrupt the populace becomes corrupt: these are the rulers and the jurisprudents." Again he said, "Should the day come wherein I increase not in knowledge wherewith to draw nearer to God, let the dawn of that day be accursed."

1. *Masabih*, Vol.I, p. 14; Ahmad ibn-Hanbal, Musnad, 'Ilm, I:II al-Tayalisi.2476.

Concerning the superiority of knowledge to worship and martyrdom, the Prophet said, "The superior rank the learned man holds in relation to the worshipper is like the superior rank I hold in relation to the best of men."[1] See how he placed knowledge on an equal footing with prophethood and belittled the value of practice without knowledge, despite the fact that the worshipper may not be ignorant of the worship which he observes. Moreover, without this knowledge there would have been no worship. The Prophet also said, "The superior rank the learned man holds over the worshipper is similar to the superiority of the moon when it is full over the other stars."[2] And again, "They will, on the day of resurrection, intercede [before God]: the prophets, then the learned, then the martyrs."[3] Great then is the state of knowledge which ranks next to prophthood and stands over martyrdom, the merits of the latter notwithstanding. The Prophet also said, "God was not worshipped with anyone better than the learned in religion. Verily a single jurisprudent is more formidable to Satan than a thousand worshippers."[4] For everything has [its] foundation, and the foundations of this religion is jurisprudence. And again, "The best part of your faith is [also] the easiest, and the best form of worship is jurisprudence." The Prophet also said, "The learned believer holds a rank seventy degrees higher than that of the ordinary believer." And again, "Verily you have come upon a time whose jurisprudents are many and Qur'an readers as well as preachers are few, whose beggars are rare and givers numerous, wherein deeds are better than knowledge. But there will come a time when jurisprudents are few and preachers many, whose givers are few and beggars numerous, wherein knowledge is better than works."[5] The Prophet also said, "Between the learned and the worshipper are a hundred degrees, each two of which are separated by the extent of a racing horse's run in seventy years."[6] The Prophet was also asked, "O Apostle of God! What works are best?" To which he replied, "Your knowledge of God." He was then asked, "Which knowledge do you mean?" He answered, "Your Knowledge

1. *Masabih*, Vol. 1, p. 14.
2. *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 17: 4.
3. *Ibn-Majah*, 37 (22: 7).
4. *Cf. ibn-Majah* Intro., 17: 3.
5. *Cf. ibn-Hanbal, 'Ilm*, 40.
6. *Cf. al-Darimi, Sunan*, Intro., 32.

of God." Again he was asked, "We enquire about works and you reply concerning knowledge." Muhammad then said, "With your knowledge of God, a few works will suffice, but without such knowledge, no works, however numerous, avail." The Prophet also said, "On the day of resurrection God will [first] raise the worshippers and then the learned to whom He will say, 'O ye company of the learned, I did not imbue you with My knowledge but for My knowledge of you. Moreover, I did not imbue you with My Knowledge in order to torment you. Go ye, therefore, for verily I have forgiven you'."[1]

As to [the evidence of the value of knowledge in] the sayings of the Companions (*al-athar*), 'Ali ibn-abi-Talib[2] said to Kumayl,[3] "O thou perfect of knowledge ! Knowledge is better than riches; for knowledge guardeth thee whereas thou guardest riches. Knowledge governs while riches are governed. Riches diminish with spending but knowledge increases therewith." And again, "The learned is superior to the fasting, praying and self-mortifying man. Should the learned die, a gap would be created in Islam [by his death] and no one would fill this gap save one of his successors." 'Ali said:

"Learning is the glory of mankind,
The wise are beacons on the road to truth;
Man is worth his knowledge, nothing more —
The fool will be his inveterate foe,
Knowledge is man's hope of life immortal,
Man may die but wisdom liveth ever."

Abu-al-Aswad[4] said, "Nothing is more precious than

1. Al-Tabarani, *al-Saghir*, p. 122.
2. The fourth Rashidite Caliph.
3. Ibn-Zyad a-Nakha'i (A.H. 83 A.D. 702) See al-Tabari, *Tar'ikh al-Rusul w-al Muluk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leyden, 1879 ff), Vol. II, pp. 1097-98; ibn-Sa'd, *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ed Eduard Sachuu and others (Leyden, 1905-21), Vol VI, p. 124.
4. Zalim ibn-'Amr al-Du'ali (A.H. 67/A.D. 686-87). See Yaqut, *Irshad al-Arib ila Ma'rifat al-Adib*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (London, 1907-27), Vol. IV, pp. 280-82; al-Isbabani, *Kitab al-Aghani* (Bulaq, 1285), Vol. XI, pp. 105, 24.

knowledge; while kings rule over men, they are ruled by the learned." Ibn-'Abbas said, "Solomon the son of David was asked to choose between knowledge, wealth or power, but he chose knowledge and was thereby blessed with wealth and power as well."[1] Ibn al-Mubarak[2] was asked, "Who constitute humanity?" To which he replied, "The learned". It was then said, "And who are the kings?" He answered, "The ascetics". And who," he was asked, "constitute the lowest class among men?" "Those," said he, "who, in the name of religion, grow fat in the world." Thus only the learned did 'ibn-al-Mubarak regard as belonging to mankind, because it is knowledge which distinguishes man from the other animals. Furthermore, man is a human being, not because of his physical prowess for physically the camel is his superior; not because of his size for the elephant is larger; not because of his courage for the lion is more courageous; not because of his appetite for the ox has the greater; not because of coitus for the least of the birds is more virile than he; but rather by virtue of his noble aims and ideals. [As a matter of fact] he was only created to know.

One of the wise men said, "Would that I might know what thing was attained by him whom knowledge has escaped, and what thing has escaped him who has attained knowledge." The Prophet said, "Whoever has been given the Qur'an and thinks that anyone has been given something better, he has degraded what God has exalted." Fath al-Mawsili[3] said inquiring, "Would not the sick die, if he is given no food or drink or medicine?" They said, "Yes". To which he said, "Similarly the heart will perish if it is cut off from wisdom and knowledge for three days." He did indeed speak the truth, for the nourishment of the heart, on which its life depends, is knowledge and wisdom, just as the nourishment of the body is food. Whoever lacks knowledge has an ailing heart and his death is certain; yet he is not

1. *Cf.* I Kings, 3:5.15.
2. 'Abdullah (A.H. 181/A.D. 797); see *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol. I, pp. 253-57.
3. Either ibn-Muhammad ibn-Washsnah (A.H. 165/A.D. 781-82); see ibn-al-Athir, *al-Kam il Tarikh* ed. C.J. Ternberg (Leyden, 1867-1871), Vol. VI, p. 45; or ibn-Said abu-Muhammad al-Kari (A.H. 220/A.D. 835); see *ibid.*, p. 321.

aware of his doom because the love of this world and his concern therewith have dulled his sense, just as a shock from fright may momentarily do away with the pain of a wound although the wound be real. Thus when death frees him from the burdens of this world he will realize his doom and will, though to no avail, greatly regret it. This is like the feeling of a person who has attained safety after having been through danger, and like that of a man who has just recovered from his drunkenness. We seek refuge in God from the day when all things will be brought to light. Men are asleep but at death they will awake. Al-Hasan[1] said, "The ink of the learned will be likened to the blood of the martyrs, and the former will prove superior."[2] Ibn-Mas'ud[3] said, "Seek ye knowledge while it be found; it will be veiled when its narrators pass away. Verily, by Him in whose hand is my life, several men who died martyrs in the cause of God would rather that, at resurrection, God would raise them up as learned men for what they see of the veneration accorded the learned." No one is born learned, but knowledge is only the result of learning. Ibn-'Abbas said, "I would rather spend a part of the night in learned discussion than in continual prayer." The same was related of abu-Hurayrah[4] and Ahmad ibn-Hanbal.[5] Al-Hasan said that in the words of God, "Give us good in this world and good in the next,"[6] the good in this world meant knowledge and worship while that of the next signified paradise. A wise man was once asked, "What things shall we possess?" He replied, "Those things which you will not lose in the event of shipwreck," meaning thereby knowledge, while by shipwreck, it is said, he meant the decomposition of the body through death. A certain wise man said, "Whoever takes wisdom for his bridle will be acclaimed by men as their leader, and whoever is known for his

1. Al-Basri; the famous early Muslim ascetic (A.H. 110/A.D. 728); see ibn-Sa'd. Vol, VII Pt. I. pp. 114-29; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I pp. 227.29.
2. *Cf. Supra*, p. 12, where the saying is ascribed to Muhammad.
3. 'Abdullah (A.H. 32/A.D. 652-3). See *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol. I, pp. 13-16.
4. 'Abd-al-Rahman ibn-Sakhr (A.H. 58/A.D. 678). See *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* I, pp. 31-35.
5. A.H. 241/A.D. 855. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I. pp. 28-29.
6. *Surah* II: 197

wisdom will be looked upon with respect." Al-Shafi'i[1] Said "One of the noble things about knowledge is that he who is given a portion of it, no matter how small, rejoices while he who is deprived of it grieves." 'Umar[2] said, "O men! Seek ye knowledge. For verily God has a mantle of love which He casts upon him who seeks knowledge even of a single section. Should he then commit an offence, God will remonstrate with him thrice in order not to rob him of his mantle, even though that offence may persist with him until he dies." Al-Ahnaf[3] said, "The learned men came very near being gods; and all power which is not supported by knowledge is doomed. Salim ibn-abi-al-Ja'd[4] said, "My master bought me for three hundred dirhams and later set me free. Thereupon I said, 'What shall I take up for livelihood? Finally I took up learning and no sooner had a year passed than the prince of Makkah called upon me but I would not receive him." al-Zubayr ibn-abi-Bakr[5] said, "My father had written me while in al-'Iraq saying, 'Go after knowledge; should you become poor it will be your wealth, and should you become rich it will be your embellishment'." (This has been related among the exhortations of Luqman[6] to his son). He also said, "Sit in the company of the learned and keep close to them; for verily God quickens the hearts with the light of wisdom as he refreshes the earth with the rain of heaven."[7] A cert:in wise man said, "When the learned dies the fish of the sea as w :l as the fowl of the air will mourn him; while his face shall disappear his memory will not be forgotten." Al-Zuhri[8] said, "Knowledge is glorious and is not treasured except by the glorious."

1. Muhammad ibn-Idris, (A.H. 204/A.D. 820) See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, p. 214.
2. The second Rashidite Caliph.
3. Sakhr ibn-Qays d. between A.H. 67 and 77/A.D. 686 and 699 *Cf.* ibn-Qutaybah, *Kitab al-Ma'brif*, ed. F. Wustenfeld (Gottingen, 1850), pp. 216-17.
4. A.H. 100/A.D. 719. See *al-Ma'arif*, p. 230.
5. A.H. 256/A.D. 870. See al Nadim, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Fiugel (Leipzig, 1872), pp. 110-11; ibn-Khalikan, Vol. I, pp. 336-7.
6. Legendary figure to whom the Arabs ascribe much wisdom.
7. Malik, *al-Muwatta'*, Talab al-Ilm. I.
8. Probably abu-Salamah ibn-'Abd-al-Rahman (A.H. 94/A.D. 713), See *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol. I. p. 59.

On The Excellence of Learning

The excellence of learning is attested in the Qur'an by the following words of God: "And if a party of every band of them march not out, it is that they may instruct themselves in their religion;"[1] and again, "Ask of those who have Books of Monition if ye know it not."[2]

[As to the evidence of the excellence of learning] in tradition, the Prophet of God said, "Whoever follows a path in search of knowledge, God will guide him into a path leading into Paradise."[3] And again, "Verily the angels will bow low to the seeker after knowledge in approval of what he does."[4] He also said, "To rise up before daybreak and learn but a section of knowledge is better than prostrating yourself in prayer a hundred times."[5] The Apostle again said, "One section of knowledge which a man learns is better for him than all the riches of the world." And again, "Seeking after knowledge is an ordinance obligatory upon every Muslim."[6] [8] He also said, "Seek ye knowledge even [as far as] China." The Prophet further said, "Knowledge is like sealed treasure houses, the keys of which are inquiry. Inquire, therefore, for therein lies reward for four: the inquirer, the learned, the auditor, and their admirer." He also said, "The ignorant one should not hide his ignorance nor the learned his knowledge." And in a tradition on the authority of abu Dharr,[7] "To be present in the circle of a learned man is better than prostrating oneself in prayer a thousand times, or visiting a thousand sick men, or joining a thousand funerals." It was then said, "O Apostle of God, is it also better than the reading of the Qur'an?" To which he replied, "What good, though, is the Qur'an except through knowledge?" The Prophet also said, "Whoever is overtaken by death while seeking knowledge wherewith to strengthen Islam, between him and the prophets in Paradise is but one grade."

1. *Surah* IX: 123.
2. *Surah* XVI: 45.
3. Muslim. *al-Dhikr-w-al-Du'a'*. II; *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 17: 4.
4. *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 17,4.
5. *Cf. Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 16, 9.
6. See *supra*, p. 3.
7. Al-Ghiftri, Jundub ibn-Junadah, d. A.H. 32/A.D. 652-3. See al-Nawawi, *Tahdhib a-Asma*, ed F. Wustenfeld (Gottingen, 1842-7), pp. 714-15.

[As to the evidence of the excellence of learning] in the sayings of the Companions, ibn-Abbas said, "While I sought knowledge, I was abased, but when I was sought for it, I was exalted." Similarly, ibn-abi-Mulaykah[1] said, "Never have I seen the like of ibn-[6]'Abbas: to behold him is to behold the most handsome man; when he speaks, he is the most eloquent, and when he hands down a judicial opinion, he [reveals himself] as the most learned." Ibn-al-Mubarak said, "I wonder how one who sought no knowledge could be moved to any noble deed;" while one of the wise men said, "Verily I pity no one as I pity the man who seeks knowledge but understands not, and him who understands and seek it not." Abu-al-Darda'[2] said, "I would rather learn one point than spend my night in continual prayer;" and again, "The learned and the learner are partners in righteousness while the rest of men are barbarians in whom there is no good." He also said, "Be learned, or a learner, or an auditor but never anything else lest thou perish." 'Ata' said "[Attendance at] an assembly of learning[4] atones [the evil of attending] seventy places of entertainment." "Umar[5] said, "The death of a thousand worshippers who spend their days in fasting and their nights in continual prayer is a lesser calamity than the passing away of one learned man who is aware of what is lawful before God and what is unlawful." Al-Shafi' said, "Seeking knowledge is better than supererogatory works." Ibn-'Abd-al-Hakam[6] said, "I was [once] at Malik's[7] place studying at his feet when the hour of noon arrived. Thereupon I closed my books and put them away in order to pray; but he said, 'What you have risen to perform is not better than what you were doing provided your intentions are good." Abu-al-Darda' also said, "Whoever should regard that rising early for study is not *jihad* [reveals himself] deficient in reasoning and intellect."

1. A.H. 117/A.D. 735; *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol I, pp. 95-6.
2. 'Uwaymir ibn-Zayd (A.H. 32/A.D. 652-3) See ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, pp. 117-18.
3. Ibn-abi-Rabah (A.H. 115/A.D. 733). See ibn-Qutaybah, p. 227; ibn-Khalliksn, I, Vol. pp. 571-3.
4. *"Dhkir"* in B.
5. The second Rashidite Caliph.
6. Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah (A.H. 314/A.D. 829), father of the famous historian of Egypt; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 444-5.
7. Ibn-Anas (A.H. 179/A.D. 795). See *al-Fihrist*, pp. 198-9; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, p. 200.

On the excellence of teaching

The excellence of teaching is supported in the Qur'an by the following words of God: ".... And may warn their people when they come back to them, haply they may take heed to themselves",[1] by which is meant teaching and guidance. God also said, "Moreover, when God entered into a covenant with those to whom the scriptures had been given, and said, 'Ye shall surely make it known to mankind and not hide it'..."[2], meaning thereby that teaching was incumbent upon them. And again He said, "But truly some of them do conceal the truth, though acquainted with it."[3] Here God has ruled against concealing the truth as he has with regard to concealing evidence when He said, "He who refuseth [to give evidence] is surely wicked at heart."[4] The Prophet said, "God does not give the learned any knowledge unless He enters with them into the same covenant He has entered into with the prophets — namely, to make it known and not conceal it." God also said, "And who speaketh fairer than he who biddeth to God and doeth the thing that is right?"[5] and again, "Summon thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly warning;"[6] and also "..... And teach them 'The Book' and Wisdom."[7]

[As to the evidence of the excellence of teaching] in tradition, the Apostle of God, on sending Mu'adh[8] to al-Yaman, said to him, "That, through you, God may lead one man [unto Himself] is better for you than the world and all that is in it."[9] He also said, "Whoever acquires but one section of knowledge in order to teach men, will be given the reward of seventy of the righteous." Jesus said, "He who has knowledge and shall do and teach, the same shall be called great [9] in the Kingdom of Heaven."[10] The Prophet said, "When on the day

1. *Surah* IX: 123.
2. *Surah* III: 184.
3. *Surah* III: 141.
4. *Surah* II: 283.
5. *Surah* XLI: 33.
6. *Surah* XVI: 126.
7. *Surah* III: 123.
8. Ibn-Jabal (A.H. 18/A.D. 630). See ibn-Hisham, *Sirat Rasul Allah*. ed. F. Wustented (Gottingen. 1858-60). p. 957: *ibn-Sa'd*. Vol. III. Pt. 2. pp. 120-26. Vol. VII Pt. 2. pp. 114-15; *Tahdhib al-Asma'*. pp. 559-61.
9. *Cf.* Matt. 18: 10-14; Luke 15: 3-10.
10. *Cf.* Matt. 5, 19, *al-Tirmidhi*, 'Ilm, 19.

of resurrection God says unto the worshippers and the warriors, 'Enter ye into Paradise', the learned would say, 'By virtue of our learning have they attained their piety and fought for Thee'. Then God would say unto them, 'I regard you alike with my angels: intercede and you will have your intercessions accepted.' They then would present their intercessions and enter into Paradise." This cannot result except from knowledge which is made active through teaching not from passive knowledge which is inert. The Prophet said, "God does not take away knowledge from men after He has given it to them, rather it vanishes with the passing away of the learned. Thus whenever a learned man passes away, whatever [knowledge] he had perishes with him. When finally there are none left but ignorant leaders they will give uninformed opinions whenever consulted, leading men astray and confusing themselves."[1] The Prophet also said, "Whoever has any knowledge but conceals it, will, on the day of resurrection, be bridled with a bit of fire." He also said, "How excellent a gift and how admirable a present is a word of wisdom which you hear and inwardly digest and then carry it and teach it to a brother Muslim: verily it is equivalent to a year of worship."[2] And again, "Accursed is the world and all that is in it except the name of the exalted God and him who shall follow in His way, be it a teacher or one taught."[3] The Prophet also said, "In truth God and His angels as well as the heavens and the earth, even the ant in its hill and the whale in the sea, will bless the man who teaches his fellowmen."[4] He also said, "A Muslim gives his brother Muslim no better benefit than a 'fair' tradition which had reached him and which he consequently imparts. He also said, "A good word which the believer hears and follows and also teaches is better for him than a year's worship."

One day the Apostle of God passed by two assembled groups: the members of the first were calling upon God and offering their supplications, while the others were instructing men. Whereupon he

1. *Cf. Muslim*, 'Ilm, 22; al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 35.
2. *Cf. Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 24: 1.
3. *Ibn-Majah*, Zuhd, 3.
4. *Al-Tirmidhi*, 'Ilm, 19.

said, "These beseech God; if He wills He will grant them their request and if He wills He will withhold it; whereas those teach men and verily I was not sent but as a teacher."[1] Then he turned and sat among them. He also said, "The knowledge and guidance which God has sent me to declare are like unto heavy rains which fell over a certain locality. One spot absorbed the rain and put forth herbs and much grass; another spot held the waters with which God benefited men who drank therefrom, watered the earth therewith, and then planted it; and a third spot was flat, it held no water and put forth no herb."[2] The first part of the parable signifies the one who reaps the benefits of his own knowledge, the second signifies the one whose knowledge is of benefit to others, while the third stands for him who enjoys neither.

Muhammad also said, "When a man dies all except three of his works perish, namely, a permanent endowment for charity, useful knowledge, and righteous progeny that bring honour upon his memory."[3] And again, "He who leads to something good is like him who does it."[4] He further said, "Envy is unlawful except regarding two categories of persons: those [10] to whom God has given wealth and power to spend that wealth rightly, and those to whom God has given wisdom with which they regulate [their lives] and which they teach."[5] The Prophet also said, "God's mercy is upon my successors." On being asked, "But who are your successors?" he replied, "My successors are those who keep my laws and teach them to God's people."[6]

[As to the evidence of the excellence of teaching] in the sayings of the Companions, 'Umar said, "Whoever shall relate a tradition and thus induce someone to do according to its precepts, will, with the [actual] doer be equally rewarded." Ibn-'Abbas said, "All things even the whale in the sea will intercede for him who teaches men

1. *Cf. Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 17, 10.
2. *Al-Bukhari*, 'Ilm, 21.
3. *Cf. Muslim*, *Wasiyah*, 14; *Masabih*, Vol. I. p. 14.
4. *Al-Tirmidhi*, 'Ilm, 14.
5. *Cf. Al-Bakhari* 'Ilm, 16, Zakah, 5.
6. *Cf.* Matt. 12: 479; Mark 3, 32-5; Luke 8, 19-21.

good." One of the learned men said, "The learned man occupies the position of an intermediary between God and His creatures; let the learned, therefore, be mindful how he occupies this position."

It has been related that Sufyan al-Thawri[1] arrived in 'Asqalan where he tarried but no man questioned him [or sought his knowledge]. Whereupon he said, "Hire for me a beast of burden in order to depart from this city, for it is a place where knowledge does not prosper." He had not said this except in solicitude over the excellence of teaching in which lies the preservation of knowledge. 'Ata' also said, "I came upon Sa'id ibn-al Musayyab[2] while he was weeping, at which I said, 'What causes you to weep?' He answered, 'No one seeks from my any information.' It has also been said that the learned men are the lights of the ages; each is the torch of his own age and through him his contemporaries obtain light." Al-Hasan said, "Had it not been for the learned, men would have become like animals." For it is through teaching and instruction that men are brought out of the category of beasts to that of human beings. 'Ikrimah said, "Verily a price is set upon this knowledge." When asked that it was, he replied, "It is to be given to him who can keep it well and not lose it." Yahya ibn-Mu'adh said, "The learned have more compassion for the followers of Muhammad than either their fathers or mothers." "How is that?" he was asked; to which he replied, "Their fathers and mothers shield them from the fires of this world while the learned protect them against the fires of the next." It has been said that in the process of learning the first [step] is silence, followed by listening, then retention, then doing, and finally imparting. It has also been said, "Teach what you knows to him who does not know and learn from him who knows what you do not know. If you would do this you would learn what you have not known and would retain what you have already known." Mu'adh ibn-Jabal said, (I

1. A.H. 161/A.D. 778; see *Tahdhib al-Asma*,' pp. 286-8.
2. A.H. 95/A.D. 713; see ibn-Qutaybah, pp. 123-4.
3. ca. A.H. 105 A.D. 723, See ibn-Qutaybah, pp. 231-2; *Tahdhib al-Asma*', pp. 431-2.
4. A.H. 258/A.D. 872; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, p. 187-8.

have also come across the same saying described as a marfu'[1] tradition), "Acquire knowledge, for its acquisition is [equisition to] the fear of God, its pursuit is [equivalent to] worship, its study is [equivalent to] praise, searching for it is [equivalent to] jihad, teaching it to him who does not know is [equivalent to] almsgiving, and imparting it to those who are worthy is meritorious. Furthermore, it is the bosom friend of the lonesome, the companion in solitude, the guide [to religion, the comforter in both][2] happiness and misfortune, the aid to the lonely, the relative among strangers, and the beacon on the road to Paradise. Through it God exalts a few and makes them leaders in virtues, chiefs[3] and counsellors worthy of emulation, pioneers in righteousness whose footsteps should be followed and whose deeds should be observed. The angels seek their friendship and with their wings they touch them to gain thereby their favour. The living and the dead, yea even the whales and the fish of the sea, the lions and beasts of the field, as well as the heaven and its stars intercede for them, because knowledge is the protection of hearts against blindness, the light of the eyes in darkness, and the fortification of the body against decay. Through it man attains the dignity of sainthood and the loftiest ranks. To reflect upon it is [as meritorious] as fasting and its study, as continual prayer. Through it God is obeyed, worshipped and glorified: through it he admonishes and forewarns;[4] through it His unity is declared, and through it also [man][5] abstains from sin. Through knowledge the ties of relationship are made close by kindly deeds, and the lawful and the unlawful are made known. Knowledge is like an *imam* whereas works are his followers. Knowledge is bestowed upon the fortunate and from the unfortunate withheld".

1. *Marfu'* signifies the record of a word or deed of the Prophet reported by the Companion who heard or saw it.
2. Words between brackets only in C.
3. Only in C.
4. Only in C.
5. Only in C.

Evidence [for the excellence of knowledge] from reason

The purpose of this section is to comprehend the excellence and value of knowledge. Nevertheless, unless excellence is in itself understood and its meaning determined it will not be possible to acknowledge it as an attribute to knowledge, or to any other trait besides. Similarly, whoever expects to determine whether or not Zayd is wise without having understood the meaning and essence of wisdom, is sure to go astray.

Excellence is derived from the infinitive to excel, which is excrescence. When, therefore, of two objects which are similar, one has an extra characteristic, that object is described as excelling the other, no matter what its excellence may be. Thus saying that the horse is more excellent than the donkey means that the horse shares with the donkey the capacity for carrying burdens, but excels it in charging, wheeling, swiftness, and beauty. However, should a donkey possess a ganglionary growth it would not be described as more excellent, because the ganglion, though an excrescence on the body, is in reality a defect, an imperfection. In addition the animal is sought for its useful qualities, not for its physical features. If you then understand this, it will be clear to you that knowledge excels when compared with the other attributes, just as the horse is distinguished when compared with the other animals. Furthermore, while swiftness is an excellent [feature] in the horse, in itself it has no excellence. Knowledge, however, is in itself an absolute excellence, apart from any attribution. It is the description of God's perfection, and through it the angels and prophets were imbued with honour. The fleet horse is better than the slow. Knowledge is, therefore, an excellence in the absolute and apart from any attribution.

A precious and a desired object may be of any of three categories: what is sought as a means to an end, what is sought for its own [intrinsic value], and what is sought for both. What is sought for its own [intrinsic value] is nobler and more excellent than that which is sought as a means to an end. The dirham and the dinar are

objects sought as means to an end to secure other objects. In themselves they are only two useless metals; and had not God made it possible to transact business through them, they would have been the same as pebbles. Happiness in the hereafter and the ecstasy of viewing the face of God are sought for their own [intrinsic value], while physical health is sought both for its own [intrinsic value] and as a means to an end. Man's health, for example, is sought because it is a guarantee against bodily pain, and also because it helps [man] to reach his ends and [secure his] needs. Similarly, if you would consider [the case of] knowledge, you would discover that it is in itself delightful and therefore sought for its own [intrinsic value], and you would also find it a way which leads to the hereafter and its happiness, and the only means whereby we come close to God.

The greatest achievement in the opinion of man is eternal happiness and the most excellent thing is the way which leads to it. This happiness will never be attained except through knowledge and works, and works are impossible without the knowledge of how they are done. The basis for happiness in this world and the next is knowledge. Of all works it is, therefore, the most excellent. And why not, since the excellence of anything is revealed by the quality of its fruit? You have already learnt that the fruit of knowledge in the hereafter is drawing near to the Lord of the Universe, attaining the rank of the angels, and joining the company of the heavenly hosts. Its fruits in this world, however, are power, dignity, influence over kings, and reverence from all to an extent that even the ignorant Turks and the rude Arabs are found naturally disposed to honour their teachers because the latter are distinguished by a great deal of knowledge derived from experience. Even the animal does by nature honour man because it senses that he is distinguished by a degree of perfection exceeding its own. These are, then, the excellence of knowledge in the absolute. As shall be seen later, the different branches of knowledge vary, and with their variation their excellences vary.

The excellences of teaching and learning, in view of what we have already said, are therefore manifest. For if knowledge is the

most excellent of things, the process of acquiring it would then be a search for the most excellent, and imparting it would be promoting the most excellent. For human interests extend to both the material and the spiritual worlds, and no order exists in the latter without existing in the former because this world is a preparation for the next, and is the instrument which leads to God anyone who uses it as such, a home for him who takes it as a dwelling place. The affairs of this world, however, do not become orderly except through human activities. These activities, crafts, and industries are divided into three categories:

The first involves four fundamental (activities) without which chaos would rule the world: agriculture for raising food-stuffs, weaving for manufacturing clothes, architecture for erecting houses, and politics for establishing human relationship and society and for promoting co-operation in the control of the means of living.

The second involves such activities as are auxiliary to any of the above-mentioned fundamental activities. Thus iron craft is auxiliary to agriculture as well as to several other industries, and supplies them with their respective tools and instruments such as the implements for carding and spinning cotton preparatory to its weaving.

The third involves such activities as are supplementary to the previously mentioned principal industries, e.g., the process of milling and bread-making in relation to agriculture and the process of laundering and tailoring to weaving.

The relation of these principal activities to the order of things in this world is as the relation of the members of the body to the whole, because the members of the body are also divided into three categories. These are fundamental like the heart, the liver, and the brain; auxiliary like the stomach, veins, arteries, and sinews; or supplementary and ornamental like nails, fingers and eyebrows.

The highest of these activities are the fundamental, and of these the highest is politics [as employed] in unifying [people] and in

reform. For that reason this discipline demands of those who pursue it a degree of perfection greater than that required by any of the other disciplines; and in consequence it is inevitable that the politician should subordinate to himself, and make use of, the other profession.

Politics, bent on reform and on guiding people to the straight path which [insures] salvation in this world and the next, is [in turn] divided into four classes: the first, which is also the highest, is the [religious] polity of the prophets which involves their jurisdiction over the thoughts and actions of the privileged few and the common folk alike. The second is the [civil] polity of the caliphs, the kings, and the sultans, which involves their jurisdiction over the actions, but not the thoughts, of the privileged few and the common folk. The third is the intellectual polity of the learned man, who know God and His will and who are the heirs of the prophets, which involves jurisdiction only over the thoughts of the privileged few since the understanding of the common folk is too low for them to benefit, and their power of discrimination is too weak to observe and emulate their actions, and are, therefore, subject to no compulsion or restraint. The fourth is the ["ecclesiastical"] polity of the preachers which involves jurisdiction only over the thoughts of the common folk.

Next to the [religious] polity of the prophets, the highest is, therefore, the intellectual because of its service in disseminating knowledge, in diverting the souls of men from the destructive and undesirable traits, and in guiding them to those which lead to happiness and are praiseworthy, all of which, in the final analysis, fall within the purpose of teaching. We have only said that the intellectual activities are more excellent than the other professions and activities because the superiority of an activity is known by three things:

1. By examining the native endowments of man through which the activity is realized, as in the case of the superiority of the theoretical sciences over the linguistic. Wisdom is attained through the intellect while language, through the sense of hearing (and intellect is superior to the [mere] sense of hearing).

2. By examining the extent of its usefulness, as in the case of the superiority of agriculture over the goldsmith's craft.

3. By observing the object of its operations, as in the case of the superiority of the goldsmith's craft over tanning; the object of the one is gold while that of the other is the hide of a corpse.

It is further apparent that the religious sciences, which are the knowledge of the path to the hereafter, are comprehended through the maturity of the intellect; and as we shall see later, clear understanding and clear intellect are the highest attributes of man, because through the intellect the responsibility of God's trust is accepted, and through it man can enjoy the closeness to God.

Concerning the extent of its usefulness there is not the slightest doubt since it contributes to happiness in the hereafter. And finally, how could the merit of an object of an activity be denied when the objects with which the teacher deals are the hearts and souls of men. The noblest being on earth is the *home sapiens* and the noblest in his essence is his heart with whose perfecting, cleansing, purifying, and leading to God the teacher is occupied. Thus on the one hand the work of the teacher is a [form of] praise to God and on the other hand a [form of] stewardship. It is in fact the highest form of stewardship because God has bestowed upon the heart of the learned man knowledge, which is His most intimate attribute. Hence the learned man is like the keeper of God's most valuable treasures and has permission to give from them to all who need. What rank is, therefore, higher than that in which the servant is an intermediary between his Lord and his fellowmen, to draw them closer unto God and to lead them to Paradise to which the pious repair. May we, through the Grace of God, become one of them, and may He bless every chosen servant.

SECTION II

On praiseworthy and objectionable branches of knowledge, their classifications, and the rules which govern them, including those branches of knowledge whose acquisition is deemed fard 'ayn as well as those whose acquisition is deemed ***fard kifayah****; on determining the position of theology and jurisprudence in relation to the science of religion; and finally, on showing the superiority of the science of the hereafter.*

ON KNOWLEDGE WHOSE ACQUISITION IS DEEMED FARD'AYN

The Apostle of God said, "Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory on every Muslim," and again, "Seek ye knowledge even [as far as] China." People, however, disagreed as to what branch of knowledge man is obliged to acquire, and as a result split up into about twenty groups. We shall not go into details but simply summarize the matter by saying that each group insisted on the necessity of acquiring that branch of knowledge which happened to be its speciality. The scholastic theologians insisted on scholastic theology because the unity of God, as well as His essence and attributes, is known through it. The jurists held out for jurisprudence because the acts of worship, the lawful and the unlawful as well as the forbidden and the permissible in daily conduct, are determined through it. Or in other words what the ordinary man needs in his everyday life, rather than under unusual conditions, is determined through it. Furthermore, the commentators and traditionists, holding that through it all sciences are attained, stood for the science of the Qur'an and the tradition. The Sufis pointed to Sufism as the branch of knowledge which was intended, some saying that it is the science

whereby the creature, realizing his position in relation to the divine, has a mystical experience [in communion with his God]. Other Sufis said that it comprises knowing what sincerity is and what the afflictions of the soul are, as well as being able to distinguish between the followers of God and the followers of Satan. Others again said that it was the esoteric science whose acquisition was required only of the qualified, select few, and accordingly they dismissed the accepted meaning of the word in favour of its esoteric connotation.

According to abu-Talib al-Makki,[1] what is meant [by the above-mentioned tradition] is knowledge of the contents of tradition which embodies the foundations of Islam, referred to in the following words of the Prophet: "Islam is built upon five pillars."[2] Since these five pillars are ordinances imposed by God, it is necessary to know how to fulfil them. The student, therefore, should be absolutely certain that knowledge, as we have already shown in the introduction to this book, is divided into the science of practical religion and the science of revelations. The scope of this discussion is confined to the science of practical religion.

The [tenets of] practical religion which an adult and sane creature is obliged to observe deal with three things: beliefs, works, and prohibitions *(tark*, pl. *turuk*). For example, when a sane individual attains puberty and comes of age, his first obligation is learning the two words of the confession of faith (*alshahadah*) and understanding their meaning. These two words are: there is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah. He is not required to fully penetrate their significance through scrutiny, investigation, and research, but only to believe and confess them unequivocally without the least doubt or hesitation. The later is obtained by merely accepting on authority without any investigation or proof, since the Prophet required only mere acceptance and confession from the

1. Author of the famous *Qut al-Qulub* (A.H. 386/A.D. 996). See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II. p. 297; al-Sam'ani, *Kitab al-Ansab* ed. D.S. Margoliouth (Le Den, 1912) fol. 541a.
2. These are the confessions of faith, prayer, alms giving (*zakah*), the pilgrimage, and fasting cf. *al-Bukhari, Iman,* 1. *al-Tirmidhi,* 2. *Iman*, 3; *Ibn-Hanbal, Iman,* 4.

ruffians among the Arabs without their learning any evidence.[1] Thus in accepting and confessing the two words, the person fulfils an obligation which is binding at that time. Accordingly, at that time, the branch of knowledge, whose acquisition is divinely ordained and binding for every Muslim, would consist in the learning and understanding of the two words of the confession of faith. Furthermore, at that stage, it is sufficient for them. This is shown by considering that if a Muslim dies upon accepting and confessing the two words of the confession of faith, he would die obedient to God and guilty of no rebellion. With the rise of new developments, however, there would be other obligations, but they would not necessarily be binding on every individual. On the contrary, it would be quite possible [for some] to be free of them.

The new developments may affect obligations regarding works, prohibitions, or beliefs.

Regarding works, for example, if a person's life were to extend from dawn until noon, he would be required to learn how to perform his ablutions and pray because of the approaching noon hour. In such a case it would be wrong to say that it is obvious that he should persist in his study; [and if he finds that his life will extend beyond noon] and thinks that he might not be able to finish in time, [he should still persist] and perform his ablutions and pray before evening, however long this may be after the appointed hour. In short he should give study primary consideration regardless of the time required. In addition it can be said that the obligation to acquire knowledge, which is the prerequisite for works, is derived from the obligation to perform works, in which case it might not even be obligatory before sunset. This is also true of the other prayers.

Further, should a person live until [the beginning of] Ramadan, he would be obliged to learn all about fasting i.e., that it lasts from morning until sunset, that observing it requires resolve, abstinence from food, drink, and sexual intercourses as well as seeing

1. Cf. *Surah* XLIX: 14; al-Tabari, *Jami 'la-Bayan* (Cairo, 1323-30), Vol. XXVI, pp. 89-91 where these are said to have been the Banu-Asad.

the new moon personally [or accepting the word of two eye-witnesses instead].[1] Similarly, should a person come into some wealth, or on coming of age, inherit some, he should learn all about *zakah*. For although fulfilling the obligation is not immediately incumbent upon him, it would become so at the end of the first year after his acceptance of Islam. Should he possess nothing but camels, he would not need to learn the *zakah* of sheep, and the same is true of the other varieties [of wealth].

When, however, the months of pilgrimage begin, it will not be necessary for the person to start, at once, to learn how to make the pilgrimage; and since it is performed at leisure, learning how to do it is not immediately obligatory. Rather the learned men of Islam should point out to him that the pilgrimage is a divine ordiance to be observed, at leisure and convenience by every one who, as a man of means, has both the provisions and the means of transportation. This should be done in the hope of inducing the individual himself to resolve upon the pilgrimage. Should he so resolve, it would become necessary for him to learn how the pilgrimage is performed. He would not need, however, to learn anything except its essentials and duties and not the voluntary acts of supererogation connected with it; for it performing the voluntary acts is supererogatory, so would its knowledge also be, and learning it, consequently, would not be a divine ordiance binding on all Muslim. (As to the unlawfulness of neglecting to point out that the pilgrimage is obligatory whenever the individual is able to perform it, there has been considerable speculation worthy of nothing but jurisprudence). The same reasoning applies to the knowledge of the other works which are divinely ordained and binding on all Muslims.

As to prohibitions, the acquisition of the knowledge of which is obligatory, the obligation is conditioned by the rise of new developments and changed circumstances relevant to it, and varies with the conditions of the individual. Thus the mute is not obliged to know what is unlawful in speech nor the blind to know what things

1. Words beween brackets only in C.

are unlawful to see. Similarly the bedouin is not obliged to know the houses in which it is unlawful to sit. All these obligations only apply within the limits of circumstance, and need not be learnt when it is certain that the question [of their applicability] will not arise. But whatever situation resembles these and may, therefore, be confused with them must be distinguished from them — as, for example, the case where an individual who, at the time of his embracing Islam, was in the habit of wearing silk garments, or possessed something illegally, or looked at a woman whom he could not legally marry. In such a case, he should be warned. On the other hand, whatever does not resemble these things and is, therefore, not confusing but to which one may be exposed through contact, — such as food and drink — instruction concerning it is obligatory. Hence if an individual happens to be in a town where it is customary to drink wine and eat pork, it is imperative that he be taught concerning their prohibition and warned against using them. Moreover of all things in which instruction is obligatory, acquiring a knowledge of them is also obligatory.

As to beliefs and actions of the heart, knowledge of them is obligatory according to the state of the mind. Thus if one should feel any passing thought (*khatir*)[1] of doubt as to what the two words of the confession of faith mean, it would be obligatory upon him to acquire the knowledge of whatever would remove that doubt. If, on the other hand, he felt no such passing thought but died before he believed that the word of God — the Qur'an — is eternal, visible, and not a substratum for originated properties, as well as other often repeated articles of faith, he would have died a professing Muslim. These feelings of doubt which render the knowledge of the articles of faith obligatory arise in the mind either naturally or as a result of hearing things in one's own community. Thus in a town where rumours have spread and the people talk heresy, the individual should, in the early years of his maturity, be protected against such influence by being instructed in the [elements of] truth. If, on the other

1. Pl. *Khawatir*, signifying the occurrence in the mind of something which is quickly removed by another thought and which its owner is able to repel from the mind.

hand, he were exposed to falsehood, it would become necessary to remove it from his heart, a task which might prove difficult. Again if this particular Muslim were a merchant living in the midst of a town where the practice of usury was prevalent it would be obligatory to warn him against usury.

This, then is the truth concerning the knowledge whose acquisition is deemed an ordinance of God binding on everyone and no less binding on some because of its observance by others. The gist of it all is knowledge of how to perform works whose discharge is obligatory. Whoever, therefore, knows what works are obligatory together with the time of their discharge, the same possesses the knowledge whose acquisition is *fard 'ayn*. Furthermore, what the Sufis hold relative to the understanding of the thoughts of the enemy and [those] of the company of heaven (*lummat al-mulk*) is also true, though only to those who apply themselves to it. If, however, man does not for the most part refrain from the impulses of evil, hypocrisy, and envy, he should seek to acquire whatever knowledge he may feel he needs from the Quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life. How can he neglect this obligation when the Apostle of God said, "Three things in life are destructive; sordid avarice, vehement passion and self-conceit," and no man can refrain from these. The rest of what we shall mention of the reprehensible conditions of the heart such as pride, conceit, etc., all follow from these three aforementioned destructive matters of life. Their eradication is a *fard 'ayn*. It is, however, not possible except through a knowledge of the nature of these destructive matters of life, as well as their causes, symptoms, and cure; as he who knows not evil falls into it. A cure is, in reality, confronting a cause with its opposite. How could such a thing be possible without a knowledge of both cause and effect? Most of the things we have mentioned in the Quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life belong to the *fard 'ayn* class which have been totally neglected by the people in favour of pursuing things which do not matter.

Among the things about which we should proceed to inform the individual, in case they have not yet been transmitted from one

people to another, are belief in Paradise, hell, the day of resurrection and the day of judgement in order that he may believe and accept them, as they are the continuation of the words of the confession of faith. This is required because after the acceptance of Muhammad's prophethood, the message which he conveyed, namely that whoever should obey God and His Apostle would enter Paradise, and whoever should disobey them would enter hell-fire, should be understood. If, therefore, you would pay attention to this reasoning you would know that this is the true way of life. You would also find out that every servant suffers, in the course of his life, both during the day and the night from enduring thoughts (*waqa 'i*)[1] [of doubt] which befall him in the performance of his acts of worship and daily transactions. These thoughts require new obligations and consequently it becomes necessary for him to inquire concerning every unusual occurrence which may happen to him as well as to proceed to learn what may be generally expected to occur in the near future.

Finally, if it should become clear that what the Prophet meant by his words, "Seeking knowledge is an ordiance obligatory upon every Muslim," is knowledge with the definite article, namely the knowledge of only those works which are well known to be obligatory upon every Muslim, the line of this reasoning would become apparent as would also the time in which these obligations should be discharged. God, however, knows best.

On knowledge whose Acquisition is deemed Fard Kifayah

It should be known that a necessary duty is not distinguished from other duties except when the different sciences are enumerated. These are divided, in relation to the kind of duties we are now considering, into sacred (*shar 'iyah*) and profane (*ghayr shar 'iyah*) sciences. By sacred sciences I mean those which have been acquired

1 Sing, *waqi 'ah*. signifying a thought which appears in the mind and remains there. and which. unlike *Khajir* the owner has no means whatever of repelling

from the prophets and are not arrived at either by reason, like arithmetic, or by experimentation, like medicine, or by hearing, like language.

Profane sciences are divided into praiseworthy (*mahmud*), blameworthy (*madhmum*), and permissible (*mubah*). Praiseworthy sciences are those on whose knowledge the activities of this life depend such as medicine and arithmetic. They are divided into sciences the acquisition of the knowledge of which is *fard kifayah* and into sciences the acquisition of the knowledge of which is meritorious though not obligatory. Sciences whose knowledge is deemed *fard kifayah* comprise every sciences which are indispensable for the welfare of this world such as: medicine which is necessary for the life of the body, arithmetic for daily transactions and the division of legacies and inheritances, as well as others besides. These are the sciences which, because of their absence, a community would be reduced to narrow straits. But should one who can practise them rise in that community, it would suffice and the obligation to acquire their knowledge would cease to be binding upon the rest of the community.

No one should be astonished when we say that medicine as well as arithmetic are of the sciences which are *fard kifayah*, because the fundamental industries are also the same, such as agriculture, weaving, politics, even cupping and tailoring. For should a town lack a cupper extinction would overtake its people and they would be driven to expose themselves to destruction. Has not He who has sent down the malady also sent down the remedy, given guidance for its use, and prepared the means for administering it? It is not, therefore, permissible to expose oneself to destruction by neglecting the remedy.

To go deep into the details of arithmetic and the nature of medicine a well as such details which, while not indispensable, are helpful in reinforcing the efficacy of whatever is necessary, is, however, considered meritorious, not obligatory.

The blameworthy (*Madhmum*) sciences are magic, talismanic science, juggling, trickery and the like.

The sacred sciences which are intended in this study are all praiseworthy. Sometime, however, they may be confused with what may be taken for praiseworthy but, in fact, are blameworthy. For this reason sacred sciences are divided into praiseworthy and blameworthy sciences:.

The praiseworthy sciences comprise sources (*usul*), branches (*Furu'*), auxiliary (*muqaddimat*), and supplementary (*mutammimat*). There are, therefore, four kinds:

First come the sources (*usul*) which are four in number: the Book of God (i.e. the Qur'an), The Usage (*sunnah*) of His Prophet, The Agreement (*ijma'*) of all Muslims, and the traditions relating to the Companions (*athar al-sahabah*). Agreement, in so far as it evinces usage, is a source. Like traditions relating to the Companions, however, which is also evince usage, agreement is a secondary source. This is because the Companions have witnessed the revelations and have, through their close association with the Prophet comprehended what others have failed to see. Since, however, it is possible that words will not fully express what has been so comprehended, the learned men have deemed it fit to follow the example of the Companions and hold fast to their tradition though on a certain condition and in a special manner as the one concerned may see. It is, however, not appropriate to discuss it in this section.

Second are the branches (*furu'*). They are what has been drawn from the sources (*usul*), not according to the literal meaning but through meanings which are adduced by the mind thereby widening the understanding until a meaning differing from the literal is indicated, as for example, indicated by the words of the Prophet: "The judge should not sit in judgment while angry."[1] namely that he should not sit in judgment while constipated or hungry or suffering from a painful disease. This last thing may be of two kinds: the first pertains to the activities of this world and is contained in the books of law and entrusted to the lawyers, the learned men of this world; the second pertains to the activities of the hereafter. It is the science of

1. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Ahkam, 13; *ibn-Majah*, Ahkam, 4.

the conditions of the heart, its praiseworthy and blameworthy characteristics, what is acceptable before God and what is reprehensible to Him. All these are treated in the last part of this book, i.e., the whole book of *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion*. It includes the knowledge of what issues from the heart and affects the senses in their acts of worship and usage of life, all of which are treated in the first part of this book.

Third are the auxiliary (*muqaddimat*). These act as the instrument for the sacred sciences. Thus linguistic science and syntax are but instruments for the knowledge of the Book of God and the usage (*sunnah*) of His Prophet. In themselves linguistic science and syntax are not of the sacred sciences, but it has become necessary to engage in their study because of the law since this law has come in the language of the Arabs. And whereas every law is revealed through the medium of a particular language, the learning of the language becomes an instrument wherewith to learn the law. Among these instruments also is the science of writing. It is, however, not a necessary instrument because the Apostle of God was himself unlettered (*ummi*).[1] And if it were conceivable that retention of whatever is heard was at all possible, man might have dispensed with writing. But, because of the impossibility of such a thing, it has become, on the whole, necessary.

Fourth are the supplementary (*mutammimat*) which, in relation to the science of the Qur'an, are divided into what pertains to pronunciation such as learning the different readings and the enunciation of the different letters, and into what pertains to exposition which also rests on authoritative transmission. This is because language alone cannot treat exposition or its technicalities such as the knowledge of the abrogating (*nasikh*) and the abrogated (*mansukh*), the general (*'amm*) and the particular (*khas*), the express laws of the Qur'an as well as its manifest meaning, and finally the manner of their application, i.e., the science which is called the principles of jurisprudence (*usul alfiqh*), which also includes *sunnah*.

1. Also illiterate. *Cf. Surah* VII: 156. The word probably means ignorant of the scriptures, or, more accurately, a layman.

In connection with tradition and history, the supplementary sciences are biography, dealing mainly with the lives of illustrious men and of the Companions, knowledge of the trustworthy transmitters of traditions and their peculiarities, in order to distinguish between weak (*da'if*) and strong (*qawi*) traditions, and of their ages in order to differentiate between those traditions whose chain of authorities is incomplete or lacking (*mursal*) and those whose chain of authorities goes back to the Prophet (*musnad*), as well as knowledge of whatever is connected with it.

These, then, are the sacred sciences. Not only are they all praiseworthy, but they also belong to the category of the *fard kifayah*. But should one inquire saying, "Why have you appended jurisprudence to secular sciences and grouped jurisprudents among secular scholars?" Let me tell you that God made Adam from earth and his offspring from clay and running water. He brought them out from loins to womb, then to life, and finally to the grave; from the grave He raised them to judgment and from there to Paradise or to hell-fire. Such was therefore their beginning, such their end, and such their abodes. Furthermore, God has created this world in preparation for the hereafter in order to gather suitable provisions therefrom. If these provisions were gathered justly, dissensions would have ceased and the jurisprudents would have become idle. But since men have with greed gathered their provisions, dissensions ensued and consequently the need for a magistrate to rule them arose. In turn the magistrate felt the need for a canon with which to govern the people. It is the jurisprudent, though, who has the knowledge of the rules of government and the methods of mediation between the people whenever, because of their greed, they contend. He thus becomes the teacher of the magistrates and their guide in government and control, that through their righteousness the affairs of men in this world may be set in order.

Upon my life I declare that jurisprudence is also connected with religion, not directly but indirectly through the affairs of this world, because this world is the preparation for the hereafter, and there is no religion without it. Furthermore, the state and religion are

twins. Religion is the foundation whiles the state is the guard. That which has no foundation will certainly crumble and that which has no guard is lost. Without the magistrates there is neither government nor control, and the correct way to settle dissensions is through law. And as government by magistrates does not belong primarily to the science of religion but is an adjunct to that without which there is no religion, so is the knowledge of the manner of government. Thus it is well known that it is not possible to carry out the pilgrimage without the protection of an escort of bedouins along the route. But the pilgrimage itself is one thing, setting out on the road to pilgrimage is another, policing the route without which it is not possible to perform the pilgrimage is still another, and the knowledge of the manner of policing the route with all its rules and regulations is again another. The result of jurisprudence is knowledge of the methods of government and control. This is attested by a tradition whose chain of authorities goes back to the Prophet, namely, "People will not be judged except by three: a governor, a deputy, and an intruder."[1] The governor is the *imam* [the *imams* have (always) been the judges]; the deputy is his lieutenant, while anyone else is an intruder who undertakes that responsibility without there being any need for him to do so. As a matter of fact it was the custom of the Companions to avoid giving legal opinions to the extent that each was in the habit of referring [the question] to his colleague, although they did not avoid answering questions relative to the science of the Qur'an and the path of the hereafter. In some recensions the word hypocrite appears instead of the word intruder [and rightly so] because anyone who, without any special need, undertakes the responsibility of giving legal opinions, does so for the sake of acquiring position and wealth.

If you agree to this, the same will hold true in connection with the rules of invalidating testimonies, restrictive ordinances indemnities and settling feuds; but it will not hold true in respect to what falls under the Quarter on the Acts of Worship such as fasting and prayer, nor in respect to what the Usages of Life entail of civil and legal matters such as determining the lawful and the unlawful.

1. *Cf.* al-Darimi, *Sunan*. Raqa'iq, 63.

You should, therefore, know that what the jurisprudent comes nearest discussing under works which pertain to the hereafter are four.[1] Islam, prayer, almsgiving, doing what is lawful and abstaining from what is unlawful. But when you example how far the jurisprudent's speculation goes into these four you will find that it does not go beyond the limits of this world into the next. If then you realize this limitation in respect to these four it becomes to you more evident in others besides.

Concerning Islam the jurisprudent discourses on what renders it sound or unsound as well as on its conditions, but only pays attention to outward confession. The heart, however, is removed from his domain because the Apostle set apart from the jurisprudent those who wield the sword and those in whose hand the reins of temporal power lie. This the Apostle did when he said to the man who had killed another because the latter had recited the confession of faith giving for a reason his fear of the sword, "Have you examined his heart?"[2] The jurisprudent also determines with the aid of the sword the soundness of one's Islam although he knows that the sword can neither reveal to him the intentions of the individual nor remove from his heart the veil of ignorance and bewilderment. He is, however, counsellor to him who wields the sword. Since the sword can reach the individual's neck, and the hand his possessions, repeating the confession of faith with the tongue protects his life and possessions as long as he has either in this world. For this reason the Prophet said, "I was ordered to fight people until they say, 'There is no other god but God. When they say this they render their lives and possessions immune against my hand."[3] He thus confined the efficacys of verbal confession to life and possessions; but in the hereafter mere words do not avail — only the illumination of the hearts by the divine light, their secret thoughts, and their sincerity do avail. These, however, do not fall within the field of jurisprudence although the jurisprudent may delve into them as he might also delve into theology and medicine, both of which are outside his field.

1. Text-three. 2. *Muslim*, Iman, 39.
1. *Cf. Ibn-Majah*, Iman, 16; *Muslim*, Iman, 6; *al-Bakhari*, Iman 16.

Concerning prayer, the jurisprudent is entitled to give his opinion as to whether or not it has been correctly performed in accordance with the prescribed regulations, regardless of the fact that the worshipper, from the beginning to the end, might not have paid attention to any part of his prayer except the magnificat (*takbir*),[1] but has instead busied himself in going over his market transactions. Such a prayer is of no use for the hereafter just as verbal confession of Islam is also of no use. Nevertheless, the jurisprudent does pass judgment regarding its soundness, namely whether or not the worshipper has, in what he has performed, fulfilled the requirements of the law and has thereby rendered himself immune to execution and punishment. To the subject of submitting and presenting the heart to God, however, both of which are works pertaining to the hereafter and through which works are rendered efficacious, the jurisprudent does not address himself; and in case he does, he oversteps his bounds.

Concerning almsgiving, the jurisprudent examines what satisfies the demand of the magistrate so that in the event that the payment of the alms is withheld and, consequently, the magistrate exacts it by force, the jurisprudent then rules that the responsibility of the magistrate has been fulfilled. It is related that Abu-Yusuf,[2] the judge, was in the habit of giving away all his income to his wife at the end of each year and in turn making her give away hers to him in order to avoid the payment of alms. On being informed of it, abu-Hanifah[3] declared that that was the result of abu-Yusuf's versatility in jurisprudence; and abu-Hanifah was right because such a thing is the result of worldly wisdom. Nevertheless, its harm in the hereafter outweighs every benefit it may yield in this world. Moreover, such knowledge is harmful.

1. The *takbir* consists of the repetition of the words *Allahu-akbar* meaning "God is great."
2. Ya'qub ibn-Ibrahim ibn-Habib (A.H. 182/A.D. 798); author of the *Kitab al-Kharaj*. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, pp. 334-42.
3. Al-Nu'man ibn-Thabit. (A.H. 150 A.D. 767) founder of the Hanafite school of law and teacher of abu-Yusuf. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, pp. 74-80.

Concerning the lawful and the unlawful, abstinence from the latter is a part of religion. Piety, moreover, has four grades. The first is that piety which is required for just testimony and the relinquishing of which disqualifies man to bear witness before a court, or to be a judge, or to act as a governor. It consists, in other words, in avoiding all that is clearly unlawful.

The second is the piety of honest men which guards against dubiosities which engender ambiguous and misleading interpretations. Thus the Prophet said, "Discard that which is dubious for that which is indubious."[1] He also said, "Sin is heart-alluring."

The third is the piety of the godly which entails desisting from perfectly lawful deeds for fear they may lead to deeds which are unlawful. In this connection the Prophet said, "No man will be numbered among the godly unless he is wont to avoid what is harmless for fear of what is harmful."[2] Of Such is the reluctance to discuss the affairs of people lest one be drawn into backbiting, and the abstinence from eating or drinking of things which whet the appetite lest that should stimulate passion and lust which lead man to commit that which is forbidden.

The fourth is the piety of the saints which shuns all things but God for fear of expending one single hour of life in things which, although it is clear and certain that they lead to nothing unlawful, do not help to bring the individual nearer to God.

All these grades of piety, except the first, namely the piety of witnesses and judges as well as what militates against justice, are outside the domain of the jurisprudent. Furthermore, to comply with the requirements of this first grade of piety does not preclude sin being punished in the hereafter. The Prophet said to Wabisah,[3] "Consult your own heart although you have been given a dispensation

1. Al-Tayalisi, No. 1178.
2. Ibn-Majah, *al-Wara 'w-al-Taqwa*, 1.
3. Abu-Salim Wabisah ibn-Ma'bad al-Asadi, one of the Companions of the Prophet; he embraced Islam in A.H. 9/A.D. 630. See Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 176; *Tahdhib al-Asma'*, p. 611.

once, twice to thrice."[1] The jurisprudent does not, and should not, express an opinion regarding the things which allure and perplex the heart, or how to deal with them but confines his opinion to those things which militate against justice. Hence the entire scope of the jurisprudent's domain is limited to the affairs of this world which pave the road to the hereafter. Should he then touch upon the attributes of the heart and the rules of the hereafter, he does so as an intruder just as he would be whenever anything relative to medicine, arithmetic, astronomy and theology confronts him. The same is true of philosophy in relation to syntax or poetry. Sufyan al-Thawri, an authority in exoteric knowledge used to say that the study of this science is not among the provisions for the hereafter. How could it be when it is agreed that the value of knowledge is acting according to its precepts? Is is possible, therefore, to hold as provisions for the hereafter the knowledge of the forms that divorce might take, either *zihar*[2] or by *li 'an*,[3] of contracts involving immediate payment of the price and admitting delay in the delivery of the article purchased (*salam*)[4], of hire, rental, and lease (*ijarah*),[5] and of money-changing (*sarf*)?[6] Anyone who acquires the knowledge of these things, hoping thereby to draw nearer to God, would certainly be mad. Indeed, nothing but engaging body and soul in the service of God and His worship would draw people nearer to God; and nobility lies in knowing how to accomplish these deeds.

1. *Al-Darimi*, Buyu',2.
2. A form of divorce by the formula: *anii 'alayya kazahr ummi* (thou art to me as my mother 's back). This is reminiscent of pre-Islamic practice. *Cf. Surah* LVIII: 2; *al-Bukhari*, Talaq, 23, *ibn-Majah*, Talaq, 25.
3. A form of divorce which takes place under the following circumstances: if a man accuses his wife of adultery and does not prove it by four witnesses, he must swear before God that he is telling the truth and then add. "If I am a liar may God curse me". The wife then says, "I swear before God that my husband lies;" and then adds, "May God's wrath be upon me if this man be telling the truth." After this the divorce takes place *ipso facto. Cf. Surah* XXIV: 6; *al-Bukhari*, Talaq, 4, 25, 27-36; *ibn-Majah*, Talaq, 27.
4. See *al-Bukhari*, *Salam*; al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Jurjani, *al-Ta'rifat*, ed. G. Flugel (Leipzig, 1845), p. 126.
5. See *al-Bukhari*, Ijarah.
6. See *al-Bukhari*, Shirkah, 10.

If you should say, "Why have you regarded medicine and jurisprudence in the same way when medicine pertains to the affairs of this world, namely the welfare of the body, while upon jurisprudence depends the welfare of religion; and furthermore does not this equal regard of the two violate the public consensus of opinion among all Muslims?" Then know that such a treatment is not necessary and in fact the two sciences differ. Jurisprudence is superior to medicine on three counts; first because it is sacred knowledge and unlike medicine, which is not sacred knowledge, jurisprudence is derived from prophecy; second, it is superior to medicine because no one of those who are treading the road to the hereafter can do without it, neither the healthy nor the ailing; while on the other hand only the sick, who are a minority, need medicine; thirdly, because jurisprudence is akin to the science of the road of the hereafter, being a study of the works or the senses. The origin of these works as well as their source lies in the attributes of the heart. Thus praiseworthy works are the result of praiseworthy characters endowed with saving grace in hereafter; similarly the blameworthy works are the result of blameworthy characters. The connection between the senses and the heart is thus clear.

Health and disease, however, result from certain qualities in the numours characteristics of the body, not of the heart No matter how often jurisprudence is compared with medicine, the superiority of the former is evident. Similarly, whenever the science of the road of the hereafter is compared with jurisprudence the superiority of the former is evident.

If you should say, "Explain to me the science of the road of the hereafter in such a manner as will bring out its outline if the inquiry into its details is not possible," know, then, that it is divided into two parts: the science of revelation and the science of practical religion.

The science of revelation is the science of esoterics which is the goal of all sciences. One of the Gnostics said, "I fear that whoever should lack a portion of that science would come upon evil end." The

least portion of the science of revelation is believing in it and placing it in the hands of those worthy of it. Another said, "Whoever has these two characteristics, heresy and pride, will never be blessed with any of this science". It was also said, "Whoever loves God succeeds, but whoever loves this world and persists in his desires will not attain the science of revelation, though he might attain the other sciences." The least punishment which the person who denies revelation will suffer is that he will not be blessed with any of its gifts. Thus a poet said:

"In his absence from the side,

Let his penalty abide."

Furthermore, the science of revelation is the science concerned with the saints and the favourites of God. It stands for a light which shines in the heart when it is cleansed and purified of its blameworthy qualities. Through this light is revealed the truth of several things, whose names have hitherto often been heard, and to which ambiguous and obscure meanings have been attached. Through it, these truths are clarified until the true knowledge of the essence of God is attained together with that of His eternal and perfect attributes, His works and wisdom in the creation of this world and the hereafter as well as the reason for His exalting the latter over the former. Through it also is attained the knowledge of the meaning of prophecy and prophet and the import of revelation. Through it is obtained the truth about Satan, the meaning of the words angels and devils, and the cause of the enmity between Satan and man. Through it is known how the Angel appeared to the prophets and how they received the divine revelation. Through it is achieved the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven and earth, as well as the knowledge of the heart and how the angelic hosts have confronted the devils. Through it is gained the knowledge of how to distinguish between the company of heaven and the company of the Devil, a knowledge of the hereafter, Paradise, and hell fire, the punishment of the grave, the bridge (*al-sirat*)[1] across the infernal

1. See *ibn-Majah*, bath, 8.

fire, the balance[1] of the judgment-day, and knowledge of the day of reckoning.[2] Through it also is comprehended the meaning of the following words of God: "Read thy Book; there needeth none but thyself to make out an account against thee this day;"[3] and, "Truly the hereafter is life indeed!"[4] Through this same light is revealed the meaning of meeting God and seeing His gracious face: the meaning of being close to Him and of occupying a place in His proximity; the meaning of attaining happiness through communion with the heavenly hosts and association with the angels and the prophets. Through it also the distinction between the ranks of the people in the different heavens is determined until they see one another in the same way as Venus is seen in the heart of heaven. Many other things which would require a great deal of time to explain because people, once they accept them in principle, take different stands with regard to their significations, are also determined through this light. Thus, some would regard all these as mere examples holding that the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man that which God has prepared for His righteous servants,[5] and that man knows nothing of Paradise except its attributes and names: others hold that some are mere patterns and some are identical with the realities which their names signify. Likewise others hold that the limit to which our knowledge of God can reach is to admit the inability to know Him. There are some also who claim great things on the subject of knowing God while others say that we cannot go beyond what all the common people have reached, namely that God is omniscient and omnipotent, that He hears and sees, and that He speaks. We, therefore, mean by the science of revelation that science whereby the cover is removed so that the truth regarding these things becomes as clear as if it were seen by the eye, leaving thereby no room for any doubt. Man would, by himself, be capable of such a thing had not rust resulting from the filth of this world accumulated over the surface of the mirror of his heart. By the science of the road of the hereafter we mean the knowledge of how to remove from the surface

1. *Cf. Surah* XXI: 47; XLII; 16. 2. *Cf. Surah* XL: 28.
3. *Surah* XVII: 15. 4. *Surah* XXIX: 64.
5. *Cf.* Is 64:4; I Cor. 2: 9; also al-Darimi, Raqa'iq, 105.

of this mirror that filth which bars the knowing of God, His attributes, and His works. The mirror is cleansed and purified by desisting from lust and emulating the prophets in all their states. Thus to whatever extent the heart is cleansed and made to face the truth, to that same extent will it reflect His reality. But there is no way to this except through discipline [which will be discussed in its proper place], learning, and instruction.

These sciences are not recorded in books and are not discussed by him whom God has blessed with any of them except among his own circle of intimates who partake with him of them through discourses and secret communication. This last method is nothing but the occult science which the Prophet had in mind when he said, "Verily of knowledge is a branch that resembles a hidden thing; no one grasps it except those who know God; whenever they declare it no one fails to recognize it except those who know not God. Despise not, therefore, a learned man whom God has blessed with this knowledge because God Himself does not despise that man once He has imparted to him that knowledge."

The second part, namely the science of practical religion, is the science of the states of the heart, of which the praiseworthy are fortitude, gratitude, fear, hope, resignation, devotion, piety, contentment, generosity, recognition of one's obligation to God under all circumstances, charity, good faith, morality, fellowship, truthfulness, and sincerity. To know the truth concerning these states as well as their definitions and the means whereby they are attained, together with their fruits and signs, and tending whatever states has been weakened until it becomes strong again and whatever has disappeared until it reappears, belongs to the science of the hereafter. On the other hand, the blameworthy, such as the fear of poverty, discontent with one's lot, bitterness, rancour, envy, deceit, ambition, the desire to be praised, the passion to live long in this life for the sake of indulgence, pride, hypocrisy, anger, scorn, enmity, hatred, greed niggardliness, lust, extravagance, frivolity, insolence, exalting the rich and despising the poor, haughtiness, vanity, vaunting, boasting holding oneself above turn, medling in things not of one's concern,

loquacity, obstinacy, currying favour, adulation, conceit, being diverted from attending to one's own faults by being occupied with other people's shortcomings, the vanishing of grief from the heart and the departure of fear of God from it, extreme self-pity whenever in affliction, lukewarm support for truth, outwardly professing friendship and secretly fostering enmity, taking advantage of God's patience and long suffering and persisting in taking away from men what God has given them trusting only in trickery, dishonesty and fraud, vain optimism, cruelty, rudeness, satisfaction in worldly pleasures and dejection at their loss, delight in the company of people and loneliness when they depart, harshness, levity, haste, lack of shame and lack of mercy — these and many similar qualities of the heart are the seed-beds of immoralities and the nursery-gardens of turpitudes. The opposite of these, namely the praiseworthy traits, and the fountain-head of all good works. To know the definitions of these traits the truth concerning each, the means whereby they are attained as well as their fruits and cures comprise the science of the hereafter whose acquisition, according to the legal opinion of the learned men of that science, is *fard 'ayn*. Whoever should turn away from this knowledge, would, in the hereafter be destroyed by the wrath of the King of Kings, just as he who would fail to perform the civil duties would, according to the legal opinion of the jurisprudents of the world, be cut down by the sword of the temporal rulers of this world. The judgement of the jurisprudents concerning obligatory ordinances (*fard 'ayn*) relates to the welfare of life in this world, while the judgment of the learned men of the science of the hereafter relates to the welfare of life in the hereafter. Thus if a jurisprudent were asked concerning the meaning of any of these terms, as for example: sincerity, or dependence, or precaution against hypocrisy, he would hesitate to express an opinion although every one of these is an obligatory ordiance in whose neglect lies his own destruction in the hereafter. But should you inquire from him concerning the *li 'an* form of divorce or the *zihar* form, or concerning wager (sabaa)[1] and target shooting he would recite to you volumes of minute details which would never be used or needed; and in the event a need might arise

1. See *ibn-Majah*, Jihad: 44.

for some of them the community would not lack someone who could render this service and spare the jurisprudent the trouble and labour of his studies. He thus persists labouring day and night on these details trying to memorize and learn them, but the things which are of real importance in religion, he overlooks. Should he, then, be questioned about it, he would say that he had pursued it because it was the science of religion and also a *fard kifayah*, confusing thereby himself and others by these excuses. The intelligent person knows that if, in performing the *fard kifayah*, the aim of the jurisprudent has been to do the right things, he should have given precedence to the *fard 'ayn* and to several others of the *fard kifayah*. How many a town has no physician except from among the followers of protected religions (*dhimmah*) whose testimony, according to the laws of jurisprudence, should not be accepted. However, we see no Muslim practising medicine, but on the contrary all rave in jurisprudence, especially in controversy and polemics. Furthermore, the town is crowded with jurisprudent employed in giving legal opinions and defending cases. Would that I knew why the learned men of religion permit work in activities which are *fard kifayah* and which have been performed by quite a number of people to the neglect of other *fard kifayah* activities which have not yet been performed. Could there be any other reason for this except that medicine does not lead to management of religious endowments (*awqaf*), execution of wills, possession of the money of orphans, and appointment to judicial and government positions through which one exalts himself above his fellowmen and fastens his yoke upon his enemies? Indeed the science of religion has been destroyed because the learned men have espoused evil. God is, therefore, our help and refuge. May God protect us from this delusion, displeasing to Him and pleasing to the Devil. The pious among the learned men in exoteric knowledge used to acknowledge the excellence of the learned men in esoteric knowledge (*'ilm al-batin*) and the advocates of the inward knowledge of the heart.

Imam al-Shafi'i was in the habit of sitting before Shayban al-

Ra'i,[1] just as a boy would sit in the school, and would ask concerning one thing or another, to which Shayban would reply, "Would one like you ask the advice of this bedouin?" Al-shafi'i would say, "This agrees with what we already know." Ahmad ibn-Hanbal and Yahya ibn-'Ma'in[2] used to call upon Ma'ruf al-Karkhi[3] who, in exoteric knowledge (*'ilm al-zahar*) was not their equal; nevertheless they used to seek his advice. And why should they not have done so? Had not the Prophet, when he was asked, "What shall we do when we are confronted by something which we cannot find in either the Qur'an or the tradition?" said, "Ask the honest men among you and guide your affairs by consultation?"[4] For that reason it has been said that the learned men of exoteric knowledge are the ornament of the earth and the state, while the learned men of esoteric knowledge are the ornaments of heaven and its kingdom. Al-Junayd[5] said, "Once upon a time my teacher al-Sari[6] asked me saying. 'When you leave my place whose company do you keep?' I said, 'Al-Muhasibi's.'[7] To which he replied, 'Well have you chosen! Follow his learning and culture, but avoid his affectation in speech and his refutation of the theologians.' Upon leaving I overheard him say, 'May God make thee first a traditionist and then a Sufi rather than a Sufi first and then a traditionist'." This is a reference to the fact that he who first acquires versatility in tradition and learning and then turns to Sufism comes off well, he who takes to Sufism before learning exposes himself to danger.

Should you say, "Why did you, in your classification of the sciences, make no mention of theology and philosophy and not show

1. A.H. 158/A.D. 744; see *Fihrist* p. 184, 1-2.
2. A.H. 233/A.D. 847-8; see *Fihrist*, p. 231; *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* Vol. II, pp. 16-17.
3. A.H. 200/A.D. 815-16; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, pp. 551-3.
4. *Cf. Surah* XLII: 36.
5. Abu-al-Qasim al-Junayd ibn-Muhammad ibn-al-Junayd al-Khazzaz (A.H. 297/A.D. 909-10; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. pp. 208-9.
6. Abu-al-Hasan ibn-al-Mughallis, al-Saqati (A.H. 256/A.D. 870); see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 356-8.
7. Al-Harith ibn-Asad (A.H. 243/A.D. 857-8); see *Fihrist*, p. 184. For his life and teaching, see Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad* (London. 1935).

whether they are blameworthy or praiseworthy?" then know that all that theology offers in the way of useful evidence is contained in the Qur'an and tradition. Whatever evidence is not contained therein is either reprehensible argumentation [which, as will be seen, is an innovation] or mere wrangling by dwelling on distinctions or amplification through the array of different opinions, most of which are derived and nonsence, despised by the mind and rejected by the ears, while others are ramblings into things unrelated to religion and not customary during the first period of Islam. To enter into such discussions at all was then regarded heresy, but things have now changed. Innovations which turn people from the dictates of the Qur'an and the tradition have arisen and a group has emerged who made imitations of the Book and the *hadith* and based upon it false speculation, so that certain dangerous things have necessarily become permissible; they have become as binding as the *fard kifayah*. To such an extent would an innovator go whenever he purposes to preach a heresay. We shall discuss this briefly in the following chapter.

As to philosophy, it is not itself a single branch of science but comprises four; the first includes geometry and arithmetic, both of which are, as has already been said, permissible and no one is barred from them except the person who might be led by their study to blameworthy sciences, for most of those who practise them have stepped over to innovations. Thus the weakling is barred from the study of geometry and arithmetic just as the boy is barred from the bank of the river lest he should fall into the water, and as the newly converted Muslim is kept away from the company of unbelievers for fear he might be influenced by them. In this last case not even the strong is called upon to mix with the unbelievers.

The second is logic which is a study of the nature of evidence and its conditions as well as the nature of a definition and its conditions. Both of these are included under theology.

The third is divinity which is the science of the being and attributes of God. This also is included under theology.

Furthermore the philosophers have not, in their philosophy, developed another type of sciences, but have branched out into several schools, of which some are systems of unbelief and others of innovation. Thus just as the Mu'tazlite system does not in itself represent a branch of science, but its protagonists, as a group of theologians and specialists in the art of philosophical disputation, have been distinguished by their erroneous views, so are the philosophers.

The fourth is physics of which some parts contradict the law and the true religion, and are, therefore, folly. These are not science that they may be classified under sciences. Others are a study of the qualities of the different substance, their properties, transmutation, and change. This part resembles the researches of physicians, except that the physician studies the human body, particularly the cause of its diseases and cures, while the physicists study all substance from the standpoint of change and motion.

Medicine, however, is superior to physics because the former is needed while for the latter there is no need.

Therefore theology has become one of the disciplines which is deemed a *fard kifayah*, in order to safeguard and protect the hearts of the common folk against the snares of the innovators. This has come to pass only because of the rise of innovations, just as it became necessary to hire an escort along the pilgrimage route when bedouin excesses and brigandage raised their heads. Had bedouin aggression ceased, the hiring of guards would not have been necessary for the pilgrimage route. Similarly, had the innovator stopped his nonsense, the need for anything besides the familiar practice of the age of the Companions would not have been felt. Let, therefore, the theologian know the limits to the position in the realm of religion and let him know where he stands in relation to it, as does the guard in relation to the pilgrimage route. If the guard would apply himself exclusively to his watch, he would in no way be considered a pilgrim. Similarly, if he theologian would address himself exclusively to debate and

1. See *supra*, pp. 44-40.

contention and would not walk in the way of the hereafter nor would occupy himself in watching over and reforming the heart, he would not be numbered among the learned men of religion. The theologian, furthermore, has nothing of religion except the creed, which the common folk share with him and which is among the outward practices of the heart and tongue. The theologian is not distinguished from the common folk except through the art of argumentations and safeguarding the law. However, to know God, His attributes, and His works as well as well what we referred to under the science of revelation[1] does not result from theology — in fact, theology is almost a veil and a barrier against it. Those are not attained except through self-mortification which God has made pre-requisite for guidance when He said, "And those who strive hard for Us, in Our way will We guide them: for God is assuredly with those who do righteous deeds."[2]

You may say, "You have restricted the boundaries of the theologian's domain to the safeguarding of the creed of the common folk against the corruption of innovators just as the activities of the escort are confined to the protection of pilgrims' goods against bedouin loot, and those of the jurisprudent to the maintenance of law wherewith the magistrate restrains the evil-doers. But the protection of the pilgrims' goods and the maintenance of law, in comparison to the science of religion, hold inferior ranks, while the learned men of Islam who are celebrated for their virtue and, in God's sight, are the most excellent, are the jurisprudents and the theologians. How then do you hold them in such low rank in comparison to the science of religion?" To this I would reply, "Whoever would recognize the truth through men would be lost in the wilderness of confusion. Therefore know the truth and you would know its devotees, especially if you yourself have been following in its path. If, however, you are satisfied with imitating and revering the accepted degrees of excellence among men, do not ignore the Companions or their high station, because those to whom I have alluded have agreed upon their superiority and that in the field of religion they are neither equalled

1. See supra, pp. 44-49.
2. *Surah*, XXIX: 69.

nor excelled. Their superiority, however, was achieved not through theology or jurisprudence, but through knowledge of the hereafter and following in its path. Thus Abu-Bakr[1] excelled men not by much fasting or prayer, not by prolific recitation of traditions or the stating of legal opinions, and certainly not by theology, but as the Prophet testified, by something which rested in his bosom. Let your desire lie in seeking that secret for it is the precious jewel and the hidden pearl. Avoid also what most people have approved, praised, and exalted for reasons the explanation of which is beyond our present scope." The Prophet of God died leaving behind him thousands of Companions, all of whom knew God and were commended by the Prophet himself; none excepting some ten of them were versed in the science of theology or ever appointed themselves dispensers of legal opinions. One of these was ibn 'Umar[2] who, whenever he was asked to give a legal opinion, used to reply, "Go to such and such a governor who has taken the affairs of the people upon himself and lay this responsibility upon his shoulders"; indicating thereby that the right to give an opinion on legal decisions and cases is an adjunct of government and authority.

When 'Umar[3] died, ibn-Mas'ud exclaimed, "Nine-tenths of all knowledge have vanished." He was then told, "How do you say such a thing when we still have among us most of the Companions?" To which he replied, "I did not mean the science of legal opinions and decisions; rather I mean the science of knowing God." Would you then think that he meant the science of theology and polemics? And why do you not strive to obtain that knowledge of which nine-tenths have vanished with the death of 'Umar? It was also 'Umar who closed the door of theological and polemic speculation and lashed Sabigh with a whip when the latter confronted 'Umar with a question concerning two contradictory verses in the Book of God, banished him therefore from his company, and ordered the people to do the same.

1. The first caliph.
2. 'Abdullah, son of the second caliph (A.H. 73/A.D. 692-3); see ibn-Sa'd, Vol. IV Pt. I, pp. 105-38.
3. The second caliph.

As to your saying that among the learned men, those who are well known are the jurisprudents and theologians, you should know that what secures excellence before God is something and what achieves fame among men is another. Thus Abu-Bakr's fame was because of the caliphate while his excellence was because of the secret which rested in his bosom. Similarly, 'Umar's fame rested on his political acumen while his excellence was the result of the science of knowing God, nine-tenths of which science vanished with his death, as well as the result of his efforts to come closer to God in the transaction of the affairs of his government and in his justice and mercy in dealing with his subjects. This is a thing hidden in his heart; nevertheless it is not impossible to imagine that the rest of his outward deeds could have been motivated by his desire for power, prestige, and reputation, as well as his ambition for fame. Fame, therefore, is the result of things destructive and excellence the result of things secret, known to no one else.

Consequently, the jurisprudents and the theologians, like the caliphs, the judges, and the learned men, differ. Some of them (for example) have sought God through their knowledge, legal opinions, and through their protection of the usage of the Prophet of God, and courted thereby neither false appearance nor public attention. Those are they who merit the approval of God and who obtain excellence in His sight because they act according to their knowledge and because they seek His face through their legal opinions and speculations; for every knowledge is work, an acquired activity, but not every work is knowledge.[2]

The physician can come closer to God through his knowledge and would be rewarded for it because he labours for God. The

1. B-Dubay'; ibn-Isl'; see Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, ed. F. Wustenfeld (Leipzing, 1866-70), Vol. III, p. 677.
2. Al-Ghazzali seems to mean by this passage that every act of learning is work, i.e. an action whereby something not inherent is acquired, the contrary of which is that by every work that one does, one does not necessarily acquire knowledge. The two phrases however allow for a multitude of interpretations of which this is only one strong possibility.

magistrate, too, mediates between his subjects for the sake of God and would therefore meet His approval and be rewarded, not because he holds people answerable according to the science of religion, but because he is entrusted with a work intended to draw men closer to God.

That with which men draw closer to God is divided into three parts; pure knowledge which is the science of revelation; pure works such as, for example, the justice of the magistrate and his rule among men; and a mixture of works and knowledge which is the science of the path of the hereafter whose possessor belongs to both the men of knowledge and the men of works. Examine yourself, therefore, and see, whether you will on the day of resurrection be in the company of the learned men of God, or in that of the labourers of God, or in both investing with each of the two. This is more important to you than imitation for the sole purpose of being popular. Thus it was said:

"'Take thou the cash and let the credit go,'

Thou hast no need of Saturn when the sun doth rise."

We shall, however, relate to you from the lives of the early jurisprudents things which will show you that those who have professed to be their followers have in reality done them injustice and are their most virulent enemies on the day of judgment. Those (early jurisprudents) sought nothing with their knowledge except the face of God. Several things in their lives were seen as belonging to the signs of the learned men of the hereafter — this we shall clarify under the section which deals with those signs. These men did not devote themselves exclusively to the science of jurisprudence but were employed in the science of the hearts and the observation thereof.

They were kept form teaching and composing by the thing which had kept the Companions from the same persuits in the field of jurisprudence, despite the fact that the latter were jurisprudents devoted to the giving of legal opinions. The reasons which kept them from teaching and composing and the causes which barred them from these pursuits are evident and require no mention. Nevertheless, we

shall, in this connection, recount a few things from their lives to show that what we have already related is in no way disparaging to them but to those who have feigned to be following their example and their school of thought while, in fact, they were opposed to them in their works and lives.

The jurisprudents who are the spokesmen of the science of jurisprudence and the leaders of men, namely those whose school claims the greatest following, are five: al-Shafi'i, Malik, abu-Hanifah, Ahmad ibn-Hanbal, and Sufyan al-Thawri, each of whom has been a worshipper of God, an ascetic, a learned man versed in the science of the hereafter, a jurisprudent well-informed in the affairs of men in this world, and a devotee to the knowledge of God's face. All of these five characteristics, with the exception of the fourth, the pursuit and thorough research into the details of jurisprudence, have been cultivated by the jurisprudents of the different schools, because the other four characteristics are of no use except for the hereafter, while this particular one is useful for the affairs of this world and the next. Its value for this world, however, diminishes when the hereafter becomes its avowed end. The modern jurisprudents have taken it up and consequently have claimed to be like the early *imams*. But how far from the truth this is, since angels are not usually compared with blacksmiths.

Since the early *imams*' knowledge of jurisprudence is evident, let us relate some aspects of their lives which will reflect the other four characteristics. That al-Shafi'i was a devout worshipper of God is shown by what has been related concerning him, namely that he used to divide his night into three parts: one-third for study, one-third for prayer, and one-third for sleep. Al-Rabi'i'[1] said that it was the custom of al-Shafi'i during prayer time in the month of Ramadan to read the Qur'an from cover to cover sixty times. Al-Buwayti,[2] another friend of al-Shafi'i, reported that al-Shafi'i used to go

1. Abu-Muhammad (al-Rabi'i ibn-Sulayman al-Muradi, A.H. 270/A.D. 834), the companions of al-Shafi'i. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 326-7.
2. Abu-Ya'qub, Yusuf ibn-Yahya (A.H. 231/ A.D. 846); see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, pp. 415-17.

through the Qur'an once a day throughout Ramadan. Al-Husayan al-Karabisi[1] related saying, "I spend the night with al-Shafi'i a number of times. Invariably he used to spend about a third of the night in prayer, yet I have not seen him go beyond the recitation of fifty verses and at most, a hundred. At the end of each verse he would beseech God's mercy upon himself and upon all the Muslims and the believers, and at each verse describing or predicting torture he would call upon God for refuge, begging salvation for himself and for the believers." This indicates that in his heart were combined both hope and fear, and limiting himself to the recitation of fifty verses reveals his profound knowledge and insight into the secrets of the Qur'an.

Furthermore, al-Shafi'i himself said, "Never have I been satisfied in sixteen years, because a full stomach fattens the body, hardens the heart, dulls the intellect, fosters sleep, and renders man lazy in worship." See, then, his wisdom in enumerating the evil of a full stomach and how he had deprived himself of its luxury in favour of diligence in worship; truly to cut down on food is the beginning of religion. Al-Shafi'i also said, "Never have I sworn by God, either truthfully or falsely." Consider, therefore, his reverence and veneration of God and how they indicate that he is aware of the majesty of God. He was once asked a question but would not reply. On being then asked, "Why dost thou not answer?" he said, "not until I determine which is better, my silence or my reply." Notice how he watches his tongue, since it is the most unruly bodily member of jurisprudents and the most difficult to control and subdue. Through this incident is also revealed that al-Shafi'i would neither speak nor remain silent unless his speech or silence promoted virtue and merited heavenly reward.

Ahmad ibn-Yahya ibn-al-Wazir[2] related that, one day, he

1. Al-Husayn ibn-Ali ibn-Yazid abu-'Al al-Karabisi (A.H. 248/A.D. 862), a disciple of al-Shafi'i; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 258; al-Subki, Vol. I, pp. 251-6.
2. Ibn-Sulayman ibn-Muhajir al-Tujibi (A.H. 251/A.D. 865); see al-Subki, Vol. I, p. 223.

followed al-Shafi'i, as the latter emerged from Suq al-Qanadil (the market place of the chandeliers) when they met a person swearing at a certain learned man. Whereupon al-Shafi'i turned to the group of men following him and said, "Shield your ears against hearing obscene speech as your shield your tongues against speaking it; verily the hearer is the accomplice of the speaker. The obscene man would select the filthiest thing in his vessel and would do his best to empty it into yours. But if his words were ignored, he who would ignore them would triumph just as the obscene man himself would be made miserable."

Al-Shafi'i related that a certain wise man wrote to another saying "Thou hast been given knowledge; defile not, therefore, thy knowledge with the darkness of sin, lest thou be caught in the darkness when the people of learning march forward by the light of their knowledge."

With regard to his asceticism, al-Shafi'i said: "Whoever should claim that he has in his heart the love of this world as well as the love of its Creator, the same has lied."

Al-Humaydi[1] related that one day al-Shafi'i set out for al-Yaman in the company of some of the governors. With ten thousand dinars he made his way to Makkah where a tent was pitched for him just outside the city and the people came out to see him. He did not leave his tent until he had distributed all among his visitors. Once on leaving the public bath he gave the bath-keeper a great sum of money. On another occasion his whip dropped from his hand and a certain man picked it up and gave it back to him; whereupon he rewarded the man with fifty dinars. The generosity of al-Shafi'i, however, is too well known to be described, and the beginning of asceticism is generosity because whatever a person loves, he keeps and does not part with it. Thus no one would part with his wealth except him who has no regard for this world as this is what asceticism really means.

1. Abu-Bakr 'Abdullah ibn-al-Zubayr al-Qurashi al-Asadi (A.H. 219/A.D. 834); see *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*. Vol. II, pp. 2-3; al-Subki, Vol. I, pp. 263-4.

Furthermore, the strength of al-Shafi'i asceticism, the intensity of his fear of God, and the concentration of his efforts on the hereafter are manifest from a report that Sufyan ibn-Uyaynah[1] once related a tradition on mystical sciences (*al-raqa'iq*)[2] in the presence of al-Shafi'i, whereupon the *imam* fainted and those present thought that he had died. Sufyan thereupon said, "If he should die, the, most excellent man of the age would have passed away."

The same thing is also manifest in another report from the lips of 'Abdullah ibn-Muhammad al-Balawi[3] who said, "Umar ibn-Nubatah[4] and I were once sitting discussing the pious men and ascetics when 'Umar said, 'Never have I seen a more godly or a more eloquent person than Muhammad ibn-Idris al-Shafi'i. Once upon a time he and I went out with al-Harith Ibn-Labid[5] to al Safa,[6] (al-Harith was a disciple of al-Salih al-Murri[7] and had a beautiful voice), where al-Harith began to recite from the Qur'an. As he was repeating the verse, 'On that day they shall not speak, nor shall it be permitted them to allege, excuses,'[8] I saw al-Shafi'i's colour change and his whole body tremble; in fact, he was so intensely agitated that he fell into a swoon. On coming to consciousness, he started to repeat, 'I seek refuge in God against the den of liars and the scoffing of the thoughtless! O Lord, to Thee the hearts of the gnostics (*'arifin*) have submitted themselves and before Thy throne the heads of those who yearn for Thee are bowed low! O Lord, bestow Thy bounty upon me and crown me with Thy intelligence. Through the grace of Thy countenance, forgive my shortcomings, "Thereupon he walked away and we departed." On entering Baghdad (he was then in al-'Iraq), as I stopped on the river bank to perform my ablutions

1. A.H. 198/A.D. 814; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. 1, pp. 375-6.
2. See *Ta'rifat*, p. 117. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, al-Riqaq; *al-Darimi*, al-Raqa'iq.
3. *Cf. al-Fihrist*, p. 193.
4. Unidentified.
5. Perhaps al-Nafri; see ibn-'Asakir, *al-Ta'rikh al-Kabir*, Vol. III (Damascus, 1331), p. 456.
6. Unidentified but evidently a place outside Baghdad.
7. A.H. 172/A.D. 788-9; see *al-Fihrist*, p. 183; ibn-Saad, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 39.
8. *Surah* LXXVII; 35-6.

preparatory to prayer, a man passed by and turning to me said, "Young man, perform your ablutions well and God will treat you well in both this world and the next." Looking up I saw the man go by while a crowd followed him. Thereupon I hurried through my ablutions and ran after them. He then turned around to me and asked "What seekest thou?" to which I replied, "Yes (my wish is) that thou shouldst teach me of what God hath taught thee." He answered and said, "Know thou that whoever should believe in God would be saved, whoever should be faithful to His religion would be delivered from destruction and whoever should forsake the world would be compensated by God in the hereafter. Wouldst thou that I impart more unto thee?" On being answered in the affirmative, he added, "He who doeth three things, namely, to enjoin doing good and himself doeth accordingly, to forbid doing evil and himself doth abstain therefrom and to observe the restrictive ordinances of God, the same shall fulfil the faith. Wouldst thou that I should impart more unto thee?" "Yes" was my reply, and he said, "Forsake this world and seek the next and be truthful unto God in all thy affairs and thou shall be surely saved." As he departed I asked who he was and those present replied, "al-Shafi'i."

See, therefore, how he had fainted and how he had preached, and see how his asceticism and extreme fear of God are thereby revealed. Such fear and asceticism, however, are the result of nothing but knowing God, and no one of His servants fear Him except the learned. Nevertheless, al-Shafi'i acquired this fear and asceticism not through the mastery of the books on the *Salam*[1] and the *ijarah*[2] in the hadith or through grasping the other books of jurisprudence, but through the sciences of the hereafter which are derived from the Qur'an and the tradition wherein ancient and modern wisdom lie.

That al-Shafi'i was familiar with the secrets of the hearts and learned in the sciences of the hereafter would be made known to you through the wise sayings ascribed to him. It has been reported that once he was asked about hypocrisy, whereupon he answered

1. See *supra*, p. 45. 2. See *supra*, p. 45.

offhand. "Hypocrisy is a golden apple which passion has placed before the eyes of the learned who, through the poor judgment of their impulsive hearts, cast covetous eyes upon it, and thereby their works were frustrated." He also said, "Shouldst thou fear for thy work from vanity then stop and find out whose favour thou dost seek and whose reward thou dost desire, what punishment thou dost fear, for what good fortune thou art grateful and what misfortune thou dost recall! If thou shouldst think on each of these, thy work would cease to seem great in thine eyes." See, then, how al-Shafi'i had determined the nature of hypocrisy and set forth a cure for vanity. Both these things, hypocrisy and vanity, are among the great maladies which afflict the heart.

Al-Shafi'i also said, "Whoever doth not keep himself unspotted from the world, his knowledge availeth him nothing." And again, "Whoever doth, through his knowledge, obey God, his heart becometh illumined." He also said, "Every one hath some who love him and some who hate him. If it be so, be among those who obey God."

It has been reported that 'Abd-al-Qahir ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz[1] was a righteous and pious man and that he used to query al-Shafi'i about points of piety, and because of the man's own piety, al-Shafi'i used to receive him kindly. One day he asked the *imam* saying, "Of these three, patience, trial (*mihnah*), and steadfastness (*tamkin*), which is the most excellent?" Al-Shafi'i replied, "Steadfastness is the grade attained by the prophets and there is no steadfastness except after trial. When a prophet is tried and endures, he manifests the quality of patience; and when he manifests the quality of patience he proves his steadfastness. Hast thou not seen how God hath tried Abraham and then established him in steadfastness, and hath done the same with Moses, Job, and Solomon to whom He also hath given a position of dominion and power. Steadfastness is the most excellent grade. Thus God hath said, "Thus did We establish Jospeh in the land."[1] Similarly, Job, after his great trial, hath been made steadfast, in which connection God hath said, 'And We gave him back his

1. Unidentified.
2. *Surah* XII: 21 (in part); *cf.* Gen, XLI: 39.

family".[1] These words of al-Shafi'i reveal his profound knowledge of the secrets of the Qur'an and familiarity with the stations of the prophets and saints who are on their way to God, all of which belongs to the sciences of the hereafter.

Al-Shafi'i was once asked, "When will the man become learned?" He replied, "When he concentrates on one science until he masters it and at the same time addresses himself to the other sciences and surveys what he does not know; then he would become learned." Galen was once reminded that it was his custom to prescribe several compounds for a single disease, to which he replied that the desired result of all is one and that he had mixed the simples to dilute their strength because when administered unmixed they are fatal. These and innumerable like instances indicate the high position which al-Shafi'i had attained in knowing God and in the sciences of the hereafter.

That through jurisprudence in particular, and debates centring around the same subject in general, al-Shafi'i had sought nothing but the face of God is revealed by the following, which it has been reported that he said: "I had hoped that men would benefit by this science and that none of the benefits would be attributed to me." See, therefore, how he had realized what a curse it was to seek knowledge in order to obtain prestige and how he had been completely above such considerations, having had no other motive than the face of God. Said he again, "Never have I debated with anyone and wished that he would fall into error, nor ever talked to any person and did not desire that he would be divinely favoured, guided and helped, and that he would enjoy the care and keeping of God. Never have I spoken to anybody and paid the slightest attention to whether God would reveal the truth through my words or through his, nor ever met any person to whom I had related the truth and the proof thereof and he had accepted it, without respecting him and believing in his sincerity; on the other hand, no one has ever disputed the truth before me and accepted not its proof, without falling from the place which

1. *Surah* XXI; 84 (in part).

he had held in my regard and without my rejecting him." These signs indicate what the will of God is regarding jurisprudence and debate. See, however, how people have emulated al-Shafi'i in only one of those five characteristics and how even in this particular one, they have not followed his example fully. For the reason abu-Thawr[1] declared, "Neither I nor anyone else have ever seen the like of al-Shafi'i." Ahmad ibn-Hanbal said, "I have not offered a single prayer in forty years without mentioning al-Shafi'i therein." See therefore the fairness and justice of the suppliant and the high standing of him for whom the prayer is offered. Contrast also with this the rival learned men at the present time and what exists among them of hostility and hatred, and you would know the extent of the failure that results in following the example of those men. It is also reported that because of the repeated prayers of Ahmad ibn-Hanbal for al-Shafi'i, the former's son[2] asked his father saying. "What sort of a man was al-Shafi'i that you should pray for him so often?" Thereupon Ahmad replied, "O my son, al-Shafi'i was like the sun to the world and like health to men; think, then is there anything that could replace either of these two things?" He also used to say, "There is not a single man who has touched a pen with his hand that has not been indebted to al-Shafi'i."

Yahya ibn-Sa'id al-Qattan[3] said, "I have not offered a single prayer in forty[4] years without mentioning al-Shafi'i therein because of what God has given him of knowledge and the right way into which the Almighty has directed him."

We shall, however, be satisfied with this portion of al-Shafi'i life because it is really beyond description. We have copied most of

1. Ibrahim ibn-Khalid ibn-abi-al-Yaman al-Kalbi al-Baghdadi (A.H. 246/A.D. 860); see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 5.
2. Either Salih (A.H. 226/A.D. 880), or 'Abdullah (A.H. 290/A.D. 903); see ibn-Khallikan, Vol I. p. 20.
3. A.H. 198/A.D. 813. See ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VII Pt. 2, p. 47.
4. Four in B margin; *cf. Tahdhib-Asma'*, p. 75, 1. 19.

these virtues from the book[1] on the virtues of al-Shafi'i, which al-Shaykh Nasr ibn-Ibrahim al-Maqdisi[2] composed.

As to Imam Malik, he, too, was adorned with those five characteristics. It is reported that he was once asked, "O Malik, what sayest thou of seeking knowledge?" He replied, "It is fair and beautiful, but find what thou needest from the time thou openest thine eyes in the morning to the time thou closet them in the evening and confine thou thyself to it." He was so emphatic in exalting the science of religion that whenever he sat down to discourse on tradition, he would first perform his ablutions, sit on his bed, comb his beard, perfume himself, settle down with stateliness and dignity, and then proceed with his discourse. When asked about it, he answered, "I like to exalt the traditions of the Apostle of God." He also said, "Knowledge is a light which God places where He wishes; it does not depend on prolific relation of hadith." This reverence and veneration of the science of religion reveals his firm and profound knowledge of the majesty of God.

That through knowledge Malik sought only the face of God is evidenced by his words, "Arguing about religion is worth nothing," as well as by the words of al-Shafi'i who said, "I have seen Malik being queried about forty-eight problems, to thirty-two of which he replied, 'I do not know." On the other hand, he who seeks through his knowledge anything other than the face of God would not, because of his pride, admit that he does not know. For this reason al-Shafi'i said that when the learned men are enumerated Malik would be the most outstanding, and that he was indebted to no one more than he was to Malik.

It has been reported that abu-Ja'far al-Mansur[3] enjoined

1. The title of the work is *Manaqib al-Imam al-Shafi'i*; see Haji Khalfah, *Kashf al-Zunun 'an Asami al-Kutub w-al-Fnun*, ed. G. Flugel (Leipzig and London, 1835-58), Vol. VI, pp. 150-51.
2. A.H. 490/A.D. 1096. When al-Ghazzali went to Damascus, he attached himself to al-Maqdisi; see *Tahdhib al-Asma'*, pp. 591-3; al-Subki, Vol. IV, pp. 27-9.
3. The second 'Abbasid caliph.

Malik not to relate any tradition on the subject of divorce pronounced under compulsion (*talaq al-nukrah*)[1] and then secretly instigated someone to question him on the same subject. In the hearing of a crowd of people Malik declared, "Divorce pronounced under compulsion is not binding."[2] Thereupon al-Mansur had him beaten and flogged, but Malik would not desist from relating the *hadith*. Malik also said, "No man who was truthful in relating the *hadith* and told no lie did not lose his mental faculty or suffered because of old age any infirmity or dotage."

With regard to his asceticism, it is attested by the report that al-Mahdi,[3] the prince of the believers, had once asked Malik saying, "Hast thou any home of thine own?" Malik replied, "No! But listen and I shall relate to thee. I heard Rabi'ah ibn-abi-'Abd-al-Rahman[4] say, 'Man's home is his ancestry'." At another time al-Rashid asked him the same question, and on his answering, "No", the caliph gave him three thousand dinars and said, "Go, buy with these a home." Malik took the money but did not spend it. When later al-Rashid was preparing to return (to Baghdad) he said to Malik "You should come along with us because we have decided to make the people follow the *Muwatta'*[5] as 'Uthman[6] made them follow them Qur'an."[7] Malik replied, "There is no way to make the people follow the *Muwatta'* because after the death of the Apostle of God, his Companions were dispersed around different countries and in each place they related the traditions (which they knew), and consequently among the people of each individual country different *hadiths* prevailed. Furthermore, the Prophet said, 'Non-conformity among my people is a gift of

1. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Talaq, 11-12; *ibn-Majah*, Talaq, 15.
2. Divorce pronounced under compulsion is held valid only by the Hanafiite, while the Shafi'ite, Malikite and Hanbalites do not regard it binding.
3. The third 'Abbasid caliph.
4. The teacher of Malik (A.H. 136/A.D. 753-4); see ibn-Khallikan, Vol, 1, pp. 325-6.
5. Malik's corpus of tradition which has become as estemmed as any of 'the six canonical books of traditions'. Printed several times but not critically.
6. The third Orthodox caliph.
7. It was Caliph 'Uthman who gave the Muslim community an authorised text of the Qur'an and ordered all unauthorised copies to be destroyed.

mercy. It is also not possible to go along with you because the Apostle of God said, 'If they would only understand they would know that al-Madinah is best for them.'[1] And again, 'Al-Madinah does away with its corruption just as the furnace does away with the dross of the iron.'[2] Therefore, here are your dinars just as you have given them to me; you may take them and if you wish you may leave them. Does this mean that you require me to leave al-Madinah in return for what you have given me? Know that I prefer nothing to the City of the Apostle of God — not even the whole world."

Of such, then, was the asceticism of Malik, and when, as a result of the dissemination of his knowledge and the dispersion of his friends, great riches were sent to him from the four corners of the earth, he distributed all in charity; Malik's generosity reveals his asceticism and his meagre love for the world. Asceticism, however, is not the lack of wealth but rather the lack of any desire for wealth in the human heart. Such an ascetic was Solomon, despite his royal glory.

Malik's asceticism is further attested by a report ascribed to al-Shafi'i to the effect that he once said, "I have noticed a number of Khurasanian (it is also said Egyptian) mules on Malik's door, better than which I have not seen. I therefore told Malik how good they were and he replied, "They are a persent from me to thee, O abu-'Abdullah.' On telling him that he should keep one of them as a mount for himself, he said, 'I'll be ashamed before God to tread with the hoof of any beast of burden the soil wherein lies His Prophet'." Behold therefore his generosity, how he gave away all at one time, and his veneration of the soil of al-Madinah. That through his knowledge he sought the face of God and that he despised this world is attested by the following report. He said, "Once upon a time as I entered upon Harun al-Rashid, the Caliph told me, 'O abu-'Abdullah! You should frequent our place so that our sons may learn from you the *Muwatta*.' To which I replied, 'May God exalt my Lord, the prince! You, my Lord, are he source of this knowledge. If you honour

1. Al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 219; al-Muwatta', al-Jami', 2.
2. Al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 224; *al-Muwatta'*, al-Jami', 2.

it, it will be exalted, and if you dishonour it, it will be despised. Furthermore, knowledge is something you achieve, not something you receive.' Thereupon Harun al-Rashid said, 'You are right', (and turning to his son added), 'Go out to the mosque and join the audience with the people'."

As to abu-Hanifah, he too was a worshipper of God and an ascetic who knew God, had His fear in his heart, and sought through his knowledge God's face. That he was a worshipper to God is evidenced by a report transmitted on the authority of ibn-Mubarak who said that two things were characteristic of abu-Hanifah, manliness and much prayer. Hammad-bin-abi-Sulayman[1] reported that he was in the habit of spending the whole night in prayer. According to another report it was his custom to spend half the night in prayer until one day, as he was walking through a street, a certain person pointed to him and said to a companion, "This is he who spends the whole night in prayer." From that day on, he spent the whole of the night in prayer and said, "I'll be ashamed before my God to be described with something I do not possess in connection with my worship of Him."

As to his asceticism, it has been reported that al-Rabi' ibn-'Asim[2] once said, "I was sent by Yazid ibn-'Umar ibn-Hubayrah[3] to summon abu-Hanifah before him." On his appearing, Yazid offered him the position of governor of the treasury, but abu-Hanifah declined the offer and consequently, Yazid had him scourged with twenty[4] lashes. See then how he had run away from the office of governor of the treasury and bore the torture instead.

Al-Hakam ibn-Hisham al-Thaqafi[5] said that he had once, while in Damascus, related a tradition to the effect that abu-Hanifah was one of the most honest men and that the governor had wanted him to take charge of the keys of the treasury or be scourged if he refused,

1. A.H. 120/A.D. 738; see ibn-Qutaybah, p. 240.
2. Unidentified.
3. Governor of al-'Iraq under the last Umayyad caliph. Killed at the order of al-Mansur in A.H. 132/A.D. 750. See ibn-Khallikan. Vol. III pp. 287-93.
4. *Cf.* ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, p. 75, I, 24.
5. Was a close friend of abu-Hanifah. See ibn-'Asakir, Vol. IV, (Damascus, 1332), pp. 412-13.

but abu Hanifah would have nothing of that, preferring torture at the hands of the governor, to torture at the hands of God.

It was also reported on the authority of Muhammad ibn-Shuja',[1] on the authority of one of his companions, that abu-Hanifah was once told, "The prince of believers, abu-Ja'far al-Mansur, has ordered that the sum of ten thousand dirhams be paid to you." Abu-Hanifah, however, would not consent to it and, on the day on which the sum was expected to be delivered, he performed the morning prayer, wrapped himself with his cloak and sat in silence. Presently the messenger of al-Hasan ibn-Qahtabah[2] arrived with the money and appeared before abu-Hanifah, but the latter would not speak to him. Then some of those present explained to al-Hasan that it was abu-Hanifah's custom to act like that. Thereupon al-Hasan ordered that the bag containing the money be placed in one of the corners of the house, and left. Abu Hanifah then willed the contents of his house and told his son that, upon his death, his son should take the bag which contained the money to al-Hasan ibn-Qahtabah and tell him to take back his money which he had deposited with abu-Hanifah. When his son delivered the money to al-Hasan, the latter exclaimed, "May the mercy of God be upon thy father. Verily he hath been zealous over his religion."

It was also related that abu-Hanifah had also been invited to fill the position of chief judge but he declined saying, "I am not qualified for this post." Asked why he thought so, he replied, "If I were to be honest about it I would know and say that I am not qualified for the job; if on the other hand I were to lie, I might say that I was qualified; but a liar is not fit for the judgeship."

Abu-Hanifah's knowledge of the things of the hereafter and his concern with the weighty matters of religion as well as knowing God are attested to by his deep fear of God and by his asceticism. In

1 Al-Thalji (A.H. 226/A.D. 879-80). See *ibn-abi-al-Wafa' al-Qurashi, al-Jawahir al-Mudiyah fi Tabaqat al-Hanafiyah* (Hyderabad, 1332), Vol. II, pp. 60-61.

2 An 'Abbasid general (A.H. 181/A.D. 797). See Tabari, Vol. III, p. 646; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, p. 293.

this connection ibn-Jurayj[1] had said, "it was reported to me that this Kufian friend of yours, al-Nu'man ibn-Thabit, fears God very much." Sharik al-Nakha'i[2] had said that abu-Hanifah spent long spells in silence and contemplation and conversed little with men. These are among the clearest signs of inward knowledge and the concern with the weighty matters of religion, because whoever has been blessed with silence and asceticism would receive all knowledge as well.

The virtues of abu-Hanifah are, however, too many to be numbered. Had he not been characterised by perseverance in self-mortification, and had he not dipped into the sea of contemplation? Had he not throughout a period of forty[3] years performed his morning prayer (having spent all the night in continual prayer) on the basis of the evening ablutions? Had he not, also, performed the pilgrimage fifty-five times and seen God in his sleep a hundred times?

This is but a small part of the lives of these of three *imams*. As to Ahmad ibn-Hanbal and Sufyan al-Thawri, their followers are not as many as those of the other *imams*, and of the two, the followers of Sufyan are the less numerous. Nevertheless, of the five, Ahmad and Sufyan were the best known for piety and asceticism. Since this book, however, is full of the account of their works and words, there is no need to take up their lives in detail at this moment. For the present, examine the lives of these three *imams* and ask yourself whether these states, words, and works, through which they forsook the world and devoted themselves to God, were merely the result of the knowledge of the several branches of jurisprudence, such as contracts of the type of *salam*, hire rental, and lease; and the different forms of divorce, namely, *zihar*, *ila*,[4] and *li'an*; or the result of a higher and nobler knowledge. Scrutinize, too, those who claim to be following the example of these imams and find out for yourself whether their claim is true or false.

1. 'Abd-al-Malik ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz (A.H. 150/A.D. 767); see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 512-13; *Tahdhib al-Asma'*, p. 787.

2. Abu-'Abdullah (A.H. 177/A.D. 794); see ibn-Khallika, Vol. I, pp. 402-3.

3. See *Tahdib al-Asma'*, p. 704, 103.

4. A form of divorce in which a man vows not to have any intercourse with his wife for a period not less than four months. See *Ta'rifat*, . p. 42; *Surah* II, 226; *al-Bukhari*, Talaq, 21; *ibn-Majah*, Talaq, 24.

SECTION III

On what is popularly considered to be a part of the science of religion, but is (really) not, including a discussion of the circumstances under which some of the sciences would be blameworthy, and on the exposition of how the names of certain sciences, jurisprudence, the science of religion, theology, admonition, and philosophy, have been changed, as well as on showing how much of sacred knowledge is praiseworthy and how much is blameworthy.

Why blameworthy knowledge is so regarded. You may say that knowledge is seeing things as they really are, which is one of the attributes of God. Now, then, could a thing be knowledge and at the sometime be blame worthy? Be advised then that knowledge is not held to be blameworthy in itself. It is only regarded as such in the eyes of men for one of three reasons.

First when it leads to any harm, whether the harm should befall its practiser or someone else besides, for which reason the science of magic and talismans is held blameworthy. This is right and in accordance with the Qur'an which so attests. It is also a means for separating husband and wife. The Apostle of God himself was the victim of magic which caused him to become sick until Gabriel made it known to him and exorcized the evil spirit from underneath a stone in the bottom of a well.[1] Magic is something obtained through the knowledge of the properties of the precious stones and mathematical calculations relative to the places and times of the rising of the stars. A skeleton resembling the person to be charmed is made out of these

1. For this incident see ibn-Sa'd, Vol. II, Pt. 2, pp. 4-6; *al-Bukhari;* Tibb, 47, 49, 50; *ibn-Majah*, Tibb, 45.

precious stones, which is gazed into, to the accompaniment of constant repetition of words of unbelief and obscenity which are contrary to law, until a special time in the rising of the stars arrives. Through it the aid of the devils is secured with the result that, in accordance with the established order God has ordained, strange states befall the charmed person. In so far as knowing these things constitutes knowledge, it is not blameworthy. Nevertheless, it is of no use except for harming people. The instrument of evil is in itself evil, and it is for this reason that magic is regarded blameworthy. If a person should pursue one of the saints of God in order to kill him, but the saint should hide in a safe place and, then, the oppressor inquires about the saint's whereabouts, it would not be permissible to point out his hiding place, but rather, under the circumstances, lying would be incumbent. For while pointing out the whereabouts of the saint is, in itself, a true statement of the fact, nevertheless it is blameworthy because it breeds injury.

Second, a knowledge is blameworthy when it is mostly (*fi ghalib al-amr*) harmful as, for example, astronomy which is not, in itself, blameworthy, because it is of two parts: The first is mathematical in reference to which the Qur'an has pronounced that by it the courses of the sun and the moon are reckoned. Thus God said, "And the sun and the moon (run their courses) according to a (certain) reckoning."[1] And again, "And as for the moon we decreed stations for it, till it changes like an old and crooked palm branch."[2] The second is astrology (*ahkam*) the gist of which is that future events are indicated by present causes. This is similar to how a physician is guided by the patient's pulse to predict the future development of a disease. Astrology is therefore an attempt to know the course of the laws and ordinances of God relative to His creatures. But the law has declared it blameworthy. Thus the Prophet said, "Whenever the decrees of God are mentioned, withhold (from discussing them); whenever the stars are mentioned, desist (from any talk); and when my Companions are mentioned, refrain (from any gossip)." And again, "After my

1. *Surah* LV: 4.

2. *Surah* XXXV: 39.

death three things I fear for my people, the injustice of *Imams*, the belief in the star (astrology), and disbelief in the decrees of God." Umar ibn-al-Khattab said, "Acquire of the science of the stars enough to lead you on land and on sea but no more." He warned against it for three reasons: First, because it is harmful to most people, since if they were told that these results would ensue consequent upon the course of that stars, they might think that it is the stars which influence the course of events and are also the gods who direct the world. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the stars are glorious celestial bodies and awe-inspiring to the hearts, man's heart would naturally become focussed upon them and would see both good and evil required or forbidden by the stars with the result that the name of God would be erased from the heart. The feeble-minded one does not look beyond the means, and only the learned man who is well-grounded in knowledge would understand that the sun, moon, and stars are subject to the will of God. Thus the parable of the feeble-minded person who thinks that the light of the sun is the result of its rising, is like the parable of an ant which as it happened upon the surface of a sheet of paper, was endowed with reason and thereupon watched the movement in the process of writing, only to think that it was the work of the pen, but would not go beyond that to see the fingers, and behind the fingers the hand, and behind the hand the will which moves it, and behind the will a deliberate and an able scribe, and behind all, the Creator of the hand, and the ability, and the will. Most people do not look beyond the nearby and earthly causes and never arrive at the Cause of all causes. This, therefore, is one of the reasons why the science of the stars has been forbidden.

A second reason is that astrology is purely guess work and in the opinion of the average man, the influence of the stars is not determined either with certainty or even with probability. Pronouncements in connection with it are the result of ignorance. Consequently, astrology has been pronounced blameworthy because of this ignorance, not because it is knowledge. Furthermore, this knowledge, it is said, was of a miraculous nature possessed by

Prophet Idris,[1] but has now vanished and is no more. The rare cases in which the astrologer happens to be correct are coincidences. He may happen upon some of the causes, but the effect will not result therefrom unless several other conditions, the comprehension of whose realities are beyond the reach of human beings, should prevail. If, however, God should grant to him the knowledge of the remaining causes, the astrologer's prediction would come true; but if that is not granted to him, he would err and his prediction would be not unlike the guess of a man who is moved to say whenever he sees the clouds gathering and rising from the mountain tops, that there will be rain this day. Rain may actually fall though it is also possible that a hot sun should rise and disperse the clouds. The mere presence of clouds in the skies is not sufficient for bringing down rain; there are other conditions which cannot be determined. Similarly, the sailor's guess that the ship will have a safe sailing is based upon the usual behaviour of the winds with which he is familiar. But there are unknown factors which control the movements of the winds and which the sailor would never know. Consequently, he would sometimes guess correctly and sometimes he would err. For this reason, even the strong minded person has been forbidden to practise astrology.

A third reason why man has been warned against the science of the stars is because it is of no use at all. The most which could be said on its behalf is that it is, at its best, an intrusion into useless things and a waste of time and life which is man's most precious belonging. Such a thing is the most serious loss.

Once upon a time, the Apostle of God passed by a man surrounded by a crowd. On asking what the matter was, he was told that the man was learned authority "On what?" the Prophet said, and was told, "On poetry and Arab genealogy." Thereupon the Prophet said, "This is a science whose knowledge availeth not and the ignorance of which harmeth not." And again, "Verily knowledge is an attested wonder, or an observed law, or a just ordinance."[2]

1. The Muslim equivalent to Enoch See *Surahs* XIX: 57, XXI: 58; *cf.* Gen. 4: 17; 5: 18-24; Heb 11:5.
2. *Cf. ibn-Majah*, Intro., 8: 3; *abu-Dawud*, al-Fara'id, 1.

Therefore meddling into astrology and the like is a hazardous undertaking, both foolish and useless, because what has been ordained shall be, while the attempt to avoid it is impossible. On the contrary, in medicine, for which the need is great , most of the principles, unlike those of the interpretation (of dreams), can be determined and known; unlike interpretation, too, in spite of the fact that it may sometimes be guess work, there is no danger inherent in medicine.

The third reason (for which a kind of knowledge may be pronounced blameworthy) is when the pursuit of that kind of knowledge does not give the practiser any real scientific advantage. Consequently, such knowledge is intrinsically blameworthy, as, for example, the study of the trivial sciences before the important ones, and the obscure before the significant, like delving into the divine mysteries which have been pursued by both the philosophers and the theologians; but neither they nor anyone else could grasp it in whole or in part except the prophets and the saints. For this reason people should be deterred from delving into these mysteries, and instead, be diverted to pursue those subjects which the law allows, wherein lies sufficiency for the guided. How many a person has delved into the sciences and reaped injury therefrom? Had he not meddled in them, his religious standing would have been far better that its resultant condition. It is, thus, undeniable that knowledge is harmful to certain people just as bird meat and several kinds of excellent pastry are injurious to the suckling infant. Still more there are persons for whom ignorance is, in some cases, beneficial. It is thus related that a certain person had once complained to a physician about the sterility of his wife — that she bore him no children. The physician, thereupon, examined the wife's pulse and told her that she needed no medicine for bearing children because her pulse indicated that she was destined to die within forty days. On hearing that, the woman became gravely frightened and perturbed and gave away all her possessions, having also written her will. Furthermore, because of worry she remained for those forty days without either food or drink. Nevertheless, she did not die, to which the physician replied, "I knew that all along! Go

to her now and she will bear you children." The husband said, "But how could that be?" The physician answered and said, "Seeing that your wife was fleshy and the fat gathered around the mouth of her womb, and knowing that she would not reduce except from fear of death, I frightened her until she became thin and the obstruction to bearing children has now gone." This, therefore, would show you the dangers of some of the branches of knowledge and would make clear to you the significance of the words of the Prophet when he said, "We seek refuge in God from useless knowledge."[1] Do not, then, be a seeker after sciences which the law has pronounced blameworthy and against which it has warned. Rather be steadfast in emulating the example of the Companions and follow nothing but the usage of the Prophet; for safety lies in obedience whereas in adventure and aberration lies danger. Do not also boast much of your so-called opinion, reasonable judgement, proof and evidence, as well as the claim that you investigate into things in order to find out and determine their true nature and that there is no harm in the pursuit of knowledge. Truly the harm that might befall you therefrom would be greater (than the benefits). Many are the things whose knowledge is harmful to you to the extent that it might ruin you in the hereafter unless God should intervene with His mercy. You should also know that just as the keen and skilful physician masters secret therapies which, to the lay mind, seen strange and improbable, so also do the Prophets who are the physians of the hearts and the experts on the principles which underlie life in the herafter — (in their field of religion they achieve a knowledge which no lay mind can grasp). Consequently, do not pass judgement on their ways according to what you deem reasonable or you would perish. Not infrequently a person may injure one of his fingers and following his own mind would proceed to apply ointment to it until the skilful physician points out to him that he should treat it by applying the ointment to the opposite shoulder.[2] But the patient, not knowing how the sinews branch out into the body or where they spring from or how they go around the body, would deem it very unusual and improbable. The same is true of the hereafter and of the particulars of the statutes of

1. *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 23: 1. 2. Breads: palm.

the law, its rules and articles of faith which have been ordained for man to follow; all are imbued with mysteries and symbols which are beyond the capacity and the ability of the mind to perceive, just as the properties of the precious stones possess wonderful qualities which experts have failed to understand, so much so that no one has been able to determine the reason why the magnet attracts iron. Yet the wonderful and strange things in faith and works and their usefulness for the purity of the heart as well as its cleanliness, integrity, and rectitude in order to be lifted up to the neighbourhood of God, so that it might be exposed to the breeze of His bounty, are far more numerous and greater than anything in medicines and drugs. And as the mind fails to discern the things which are useful for life in the hereafter, especially since it is not possible to determine them through experimentation. These things would be subject to experimentation only if some of the dead would return and enlighten us as to what faith and works are acceptable and useful in the sight of God, and would bring man nearer to Him, and what faith and works would estrange the creature from his Maker. But alas, this is not possible and is not to be expected. You should be satisfied if your mind would guide you to the truth of the words of the Prophet and make plain to you the significance of his counsel. Put aside, therefore, the promoting of your mind from your conduct and persist in comformity, for nothing else would save you. For this reason the Prophet said, "Verily some forms of knowledge are ignorance and (eloquent) speech, incoherence." Of course knowledge is never ignorance but may have the same harmful influence as ignorance. The Prophet also said, "A little bit of divine guidance is better than a great deal of knowledge" Jesus also said, "Many are the trees, but not all are fruitful; plentiful are the fruit, but not all are edible; (likewise) many are the branches of knowledge, but not all are useful."[1]

DETERMINING WHAT NAME OF SCIENCES HAVE BEEN CHANGED

You should also know that the source of confusion of the blameworthy sciences with the sacred is the tampering with, and the

1. Not in the canonical gospels.

changes in, the names of the praiseworthy sciences and the alterations introduced therein, in bad faith, so as to connote other than those which the righteous fathers and the first-century Muslims intended. Consequently, five terms, namely, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the science of religion (*al-'ilm*), theology (*tawhid*), admonition (*tadhkir*), and philosophy (*hikmah*), all names of praiseworthy sciences, whose possessors have held the chief positions in the religious organisation, but which now have been altered so that they connote something blameworthy; yet people have become reluctant to condemn those who possess them because of the widespread practice of applying these names to all of them alike.

The first term to be affected was jurisprudence whose meaning has been tampered with not so much by alteration and change but by limitation. It has thus been limited to the knowledge of unusual legal cases, the mastery of the minute details of their origins, excessive disputation on them, and the retention of the different opinions which relate to them. The person who goes more deeply into these things than his colleagues and devotes more time to them than the rest is considered the most versatile in jurisprudence. But in the early period of Islam the term jurisprudence (*fiqh*) was applied to the science of the path of the hereafter and the knowledge of the subtle defects of the soul, the influences of which render works corrupt, the thorough realization of the inferiority of this life, the urgent expectation of bliss in the hereafter, and the domination of fear over the heart. This is, indicated by the words of God when He said, "..... that they may instruct themselves in their religion, and may warn their people when they come back to them."[1] Jurisprudence is therefore, that which brings about such a warning and such a fear rather than details of ordinary divorce or divorce through *li'an*, or manumission (*'ataq*),[2] *salam* contracts, and hire, rental, and lease (*ijarah*), which produce neither warning nor fear. On the contrary, to devote oneself exclusively to these things hardens the heart and removes from it all fear which is exactly what we now see in those who have so devoted themselves. God thus said, "Hearts have they with which they understand not,"[3]

1. *Surah* IX: 123. Al-Ghazzali took this verse out of its context.
2. Also *'itq*.
3. *Surah* VII: 178; *cf.* 115: 4-8, 135: 15-18.

having had in mind the meaning of belief, not of legal opinions. Upon my life, the word *fiqh* (discernment), now used for jurisprudence, and the word *fahm* (understanding) are nothing but two names for the same thing. At the present time, however, they are used both in their earlier and also their modern significations. God said, "Indeed ye are a greater source of fear in their hearts than God! This is because they are a people void of any discernment."[1] He thus attributed their little fear of God and their great terror of the power of man to their meagre discernment. Judge, then, for yourself whether this was the result of not learning the details of legal opinions or the outcome of the disappearance of those sciences we have already mentioned. Speaking to the envoys who called on him, the Prophet addressed them saying, "Learned, wise and discerning."

Sa'id ibn-Ibrahim al-Zuhri[2] was once asked which of the people of al-Madinah he thought was the most discerning, and he replied, "He who fears God the most," thus pointing out that the fruit of religious insight (*fiqh*) and piety is in fact the fruit of esoteric knowledge rather than that of legal opinions and decisions.

The Prophet said, "Shall I tell you who is the profoundly discerning man?" They answered, "Yes." Thereupon he said, "The profoundly discerning man is he who has not induced people to despair of the mercy of God; nor made them feel safe (rather than urge them to repent) during the period of respite which God, out of patience, gives unto man; nor made them lose hope in the spirit of God; nor discarded the Qur'an in favour of something else." When Anas ibn-Malik[3] related the following words of the Prophet. "I prefer sitting in the company of men who praise God from sunset until sunrise to the setting free of four slaves," he turned to Yazid al-Raqahi[4] and Ziyad al-Numayri[5] and said, "Our meetings of invocation (*dhikr*) were different from your present gatherings in which one of

1. *Surah* LIV: 13.
2. A.H. 201/A.D. 816-17; see ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VII, pp. 2, 83; al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, Vol. IX (Cairo, 1349), pp. 1234.
3. A.H. 93/A.D. 711-12; see ibn Qutaybah, p. 157.
4. Zayd in "C"; *cf.* ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 13; al-Sam'ani, f. 256 b.
5. Al-Sam'ani, f. 569 b.

you delivers his sermons before his friends and recites traditions. We used to sit and ponder over the articles of faith, study the meaning of the Qur'an, enlighten ourselves in matters of religion and enumerate the blessings of God upon us." Hence the process of studying the meaning of the Qur'an and of enumerating the blessings of God was called enlightenment. Said the Prophet, "The servant will not attain perfect religious insight until he should hate men in the essence of God and see in the Qur'an several meanings."[1] This same tradition has been related as a *mawquf* tradition (tradition whose *'sanad* goes back to the Companions, but stops short of the Prophet) going back to abu-al-Darda' who is supposed to have added, "(the servant) would then turn to himself and would hate himself more." Asked once by Farqad al-Sabakhi[2] about something, al-Hasan expounded his view but the former retorted. "The jurisprudence disagree with you." Thereupon al-Hasan exclaimed, "May thy mother be bereft of thee! Hast thou ever seen with thine own eyes a (real) jurisprudent? Verily the (real) jurisprudent is he who forsaketh the world and seeketh the hereafter, who understandeth the import of his religion, persisteth in the worship of his Lord, is pious, restraineth himself from attacks on the reputation of his fellow Muslims, abstaineth from (reaching his hand to) their riches, and giveth them advice." In all of this, he did not say, "who knoweth all legal opinions". Nevertheless, I do not say that the term jurisprudence (*fiqh*) did not include legal opinion in civil cases as well. This, however, was either in a general and broad manner or by way of regarding the one a subdivision of the other. But its application to the science of the hereafter was more common. Consequently, this restriction brought forth some ambiguity which caused men to devote themselves solely to it to the neglect of the science of the hereafter and the nature of the heart. Furthermore, in their own human nature, men found encouragement, since esoteric knowledge is abstruse, to live by it is difficult, and to attain through it candidacy for office, whether executive or judiciary, or a position of prestige and wealth, is not possible. For this reason, by means of

1. This is a literal translation, the meaning of which may be: "he should hate men (because of his absorption) in the essence of God."
2. A.H. 131/A.D. 748-9; see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VII Pt. 2, p. 11.

restricting the signification of the term jurisprudence, which according to the law is a praiseworthy term, Satan found the opportunity to make the neglect of the science of the hereafter and the alteration in the connotation of its name attractive to the human heart.

The second term to have been altered is the science of religion (*al-'ilm*) which used to be applied to the knowledge of God, His miracles, and His works among His servants and creatures. When, therefore, (the Caliph) 'Umar died, ibn-Mas'ud exclaimed, "Verily nine-tenths of the science of religion (*al-'ilm*) has passed away." He thus designated this knowledge as the science, using the definite article, and then explained it as the knowledge of God. Yet people used the term freely and altered its meaning by restriction until it became more commonly applied to those who debate cases of jurisprudence and the like with adversaries and are dubbed learned in the truth, versatile in knowledge, while those who do not practice that nor take it up are numbered among the weak, and are not considered to belong to the company of the learned. This also is alteration by restriction. But most of what has been said regarding the excellence of learning and the learned relates to the learned in God, His ordinances, His works, and His attributes. Nevertheless, it has now become customary to apply the word learned to those who do not comprehend of the science of the law except controversial syllogisms on disputed cases. Those versed in such gymnastics, in spite of their ignorance of the sciences of interpretation, tradition and religion, are now numbered among the versatile learned men. This, as a result, has proved detrimental to a great number of those who seek knowledge.

The third term (to suffer alteration) was theology (*tawhid*) which has now become equivalent to scholastic theology (*sina'at al-kalam*), the knowledge of the methods of argumentation, the manner of confounding adversaries, and the ability to be diffuse in speech by means of asking too many questions, raising doubts, and formulating requisites, to an extent that some of those groups have gone so far as to call themselves 'The People of Equity and Unity' (*ahl al-adl w-al*

tawhid)[1] while the scholastic theologians were called the learned men of religion although nothing of he tenets of their profession was known during the early period of Islam. On the contrary the learned men at that time condemned very strongly anyone who would take to disputation and contention.

As to the evident proofs which the mind accepts immediately on hearing and which are contained in the Qur'an, they have been known to all. Knowledge of the Qur'an was all knowledge while theology (*tawhid*) signified something else which was beyond the comprehension of most scholastic theologians, and which, when they comprehended it, they were not called after its name. Theology was then the belief that all things come from God, a belief which ruled out all intermediary causes (*al-asbab w-al-wasa'il*). Both good and evil would then be seen as coming completely from God. Such a thing is a noble station one of whose fruits is dependence, which will be described in the Book on Dependence. Of its fruits, too, are to discontinue blaming people and being angry with them, contentment, and resignation to the will of God. One of its fruits, also, has been illustrated by the words of abu-Bakr who when asked during his sickness, "Shall we call you a physician?" said, "(It was) the physician (who) made me sick." According to another report when he fell sick he was asked, "What has the physician told you about your sickness?" To which he replied. "He hath told me, 'Verily I doeth what I chooseth.'"[2] Examples of this will also appear in the book on Dependence and the book on the Unity of God.

Theology (*tawhid*) is, therefore, like a precious fruit which is encased in two successive husks. Obviously the outer husk is farther from the pith than the inner husk. People have thus applied the term [theology] exclusively to the husk which encases the pith, as well as to their protection, and have entirely ignored the pith itself. The outer husk represents the verbal profession that there is no god but Allah, which profession is called monotheism in contra-distinction to the

1. These were the Mu'tazilites. See al-Shaharastani, *al-Milal w-al — Nihal*, ed., william Cureton (London, 1846), pp. 29-31.
2. *Cf. Surahs* XI: 109; LXXXV: 16; *Hikyat al-Awliya'*, Vol. I, p. 34.

trinitarianism the Christians profess. Such a profession, however, may come from the lips of hypocrite whose secret thoughts contradict his open declaration. The inner husk represents the state wherein the heart neither opposes nor denies to express meaning of this statement, but rather the outward expression of the heart represents its belief and the acceptance of that belief. This is the monotheism which the common folk profess. As already mentioned, the theologians are the guardians of these husks against the corruption of innovators.

The third part is the pith itself. It represents the belief that all things come from God, a belief which rules out any consideration of instrumentalities and implies worshipping Him and no other thing besides Him. Those who follow their own passions do not conform to this monotheism, because anyone who follows his own passions makes them the object of his worship. Thus God said, "Hast thou seen him who hath made a god of his passions."[1] The Prophet also said, "Of all the gods who have been worshipped on earth Allah hateth the passions most." Actually, anyone who would think, would find out that the idol worshipper worships not the idol but his own passions because his soul is inclined after the religion of his fathers and he follows that inclination. The inclination of the soul towards the things familiar to it is one of the meanings expressed by the word passions. Outside the pale of this monotheism are also dislike for people and not paying attention to them, because how is it possible for the person who believes that all things come from God to dislike his fellowmen? Theology stood for this station, the station of the saints. But see to what it has been altered and with what of its husks people have been content? See how they have sought refuge in mutual praise and boasting of those things whose names have a praiseworthy reputation while in the meaning and signification for which these names stand, and for which the real praise is due, they have been utterly bankrupt. Their bankruptcy is like that of the man who, rising up in the morning, turns his face towards the *Qiblah* and says, "I have turned my face like a *hanif*, unto the Creator of the heavens and

1. *Surahs* XXV: 45; XLV: 22.

the earth." Yet unless his heart in particular has been duly turned unto God, his assertation would be the first daily lie which he commits against God. If he means by the word face its obvious meaning, the fact still remains that he has not turned it except towards the K'abah and away from the other directions. But the K'abah does not point towards the Creator of the heavens and the earth so that he who turns his face towards it turns it to God who is limited by neither directions nor climes. If, on the other hand, he means by it his heart, which is what it should be and which is the instrument of worship, how could his words be true when his heart is bent upon his worldly desires and needs, and absorbed in devising tricks wherewith to amass wealth and prestige and to secure an abundance of worldly means towards which he is directing the attention of all his being? When, then, did he turn his face to the Creator of the heavens and the earth? The following sums up all the truth of monotheism: the monotheist is he who sees nothing but the One God and only turns his face to Him. This is in conformity with the words of God when He said, "Say: It is 'God'; then leave them in their pastime of cavillings."[1] What is intended here is not verbal profession, as the tongue is like an interpreter who tells the truth at one time and lies at another. God, however, regards not the interpreter [the tongue], but that for which the tongue is the interpreter, namely, the heart which is the source of religion and the place wherefrom it springs.

The fourth term to be altered was the science of invocation (*dhikr*) and admonition (*tadhkir*). God said, "Yet warn them for, in truth warning will profit the believers."[2] Several traditions commending the assemblies of invocation (*dhikr*) have been passed down to us, as for instance, by the words of the Prophet when he said, "When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, stop and enjoy yourselves." On being asked what the gardens of Paradise were, he replied. "The assemblies of invocation." And again in the following tradition, "Verily, other than guardian angels,[3] God hath rover

1. *Surah* VI: 91. 2. *Surah* LI: 55.
3. The Muslims believe that two angels, who are changed every day, attend every person to observe and write down his action *Cf. Surahs* L: 16: LXXXII: 10-11: al-Qazwini, *'Ajaibn al-Makhluqat wa-Ghara'ib al-Mawjudat*, ed. F. Wustenfeld (Gottingen, 1940), p. 60.

(*sayyahun*) angels[1] who roam the earth looking for assemblies of invocation (*dhikr*). On locating an assembly they beckon one another saying, 'Come unto your goals.' Then the rover angels gather around these assemblies and hear the words, 'O remember ye God and give warning to one another." The [practice] has been altered in favour of story telling, the recital of poems, ecstatic utterances (*shath*) and heresies (*tammat*),[2] the things which contemporary preachers persist in doing.

As to story telling, it is an innovation; in fact, our Fathers have warned against attending the circles of story-tellers saying that it was not the custom either at the time of the Apostle of God or the time of abu-Bakr and 'Umar.[3] It was not until the appearance of heresy that they made theirs. It has been related that one day ibn-'Umar emerged from the mosque exclaiming, "No one had sent me out but the story-teller; but for him I would not have left." Damrah[4] said, "One day I asked Sufyan al-Thawri, "Shall we listen to story-tellers?" But he answered, "Turn ye your backs on innovations."

Ibn-'Awn[5] said, "Once upon a time I called on ibn-Sirin.[6] As I entered upon him he asked me, "What is new today?" When I informed him that the governor had prohibited the story-tellers from telling their stories, he said, "He had done correctly." It is also related that, once upon a time, as al-A'mash[7] entered the Basrah mosque, he heard a story-teller say in his sermon, "We were told by al-A'mash...". Whereupon al-A'mash took himself to the centre of the mosque and began to remove the hair from his armpit, at which the speaker indignantly shouted, "Old man, are you not ashamed to do that in the mosque?" To which al-A'mash replied, "Why should

1. Al-Qazw'ni, *'Ajatib al-Makhluqat*, p. 61. Cf *al-Tirmidhi*, Da'awat, 129.
2. Literally signifies calamities.
3. Cf. *ibn-Majah*, Adaab, 40.
4. Ibn-Rabi'ah (A.H. 202/A.D. 817-8): see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol, VII, Pt. 2, p. 173; *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol. 1, p. 322.
5. 'Abdullah ibn-'Awn ibn-Artaban (A.H. 151/A.D. 769): see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol 7, Pt. 2, pp. 24-30.
6. Muhammad (A.H. 110/A.D. 729): see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VII, Pt. 1, pp. 140-50.
7. Abu-Muhammad Sulayman ibn-Mihran (A.H. 148/A.D. 765); see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol, VI, pp. 238-40.

I be ashamed? What I am doing is according to the law[1] while what you have been saying are down right lies. I am al-A'mash."

Ahmad [ibn-Hanbal] proclaimed that the most persistent liars among men are the story-tellers and the beggars.

'Ali ibn-abi-Talib once drove the story-tellers out of the Basrah mosque, but when he heard the words of al-Hasan al-Basri he allowed him to carry on and did not drive him out because al-Hasan al-Basri used to discourse on the science of the hereafter and the contemplation of death, and to point out the defects of the soul, the shortcoming of works, the passing thoughts with which Satan tempts men and the way to resist them, and to remind his audience of the favours and blessings of God and of the failure of man in his gratitude. He also would expose the inferiority of this world, its defects, its impending end, and its deceitfulness, as well as the dangers and the terrors of the hereafter. This is the warning which, according to the law, is praiseworthy and which has been encouraged in the tradition related by abu-Dharr when he said, "To be present in an assembly of invocation (*dhikr*) is better than prostrating oneself in prayer a thousand times, or visiting a thousand sick men, or attending a thousand funerals." Abu-Dharr further related that the Prophet was then asked, "Is it also better than the reading of the Qur'an?" To which the Prophet replied, "What good, though, is the reading of the Qur'an except through knowledge?" 'Ata' also said, "Attendance at an assembly of invocation atones the evils of attending seventy places of entertainment."

Unfortunately, however, those who are in the habit of embellishing their speech with lies have taken these traditions as means of justification for themselves and have appropriated the name warning *(tadhkir)* for their fables thus forgetting the right path of praiseworthy invociation (*dhikr*) and spending their time in [recounting] tales which are subject to variations, accretions, and deletions, and which deviate from the stories which accrue in the

1 *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Libas, 64. Isti'dhan, 51.

Qur'an and go beyond them. Some of the tales are good to hear while others are harmful in spite of the fact that they may be true. Whoever would go after this practice would no longer be able to distinguish truth from lies and what is good from that which is harmful. For this reason Ahmad ibn-Hanbal said, "Oh how much do people need a truthful story-teller?" If his story be one of the tales of the prophets, pertaining to the affairs of their religion, and the story-teller be truthful and trustworthy, I see no harm in it. But people should guard against lies and against such stories which point to trivial faults and compromises which the common folks fail to understand, or to realize that they are nothing but trivial and unusual faults although they have been followed by atoning deeds and rectified by good works which are supposed to make up for them. In order to justify his compromises and find for himself an excuse, the layman is apt to resort to such reasoning, protesting that such and such has been related on the authority of one of the masters (*mashayikh*) or one of the prominent men, and adding that whereas all of us were subject to sin, it is no wonder if he would disobey God especially since a greater person than himself has done the same. This also develops in him unwillingly the daring to disobey God. But if one should guard against these two dangers (which are inherent in story-telling) it would cease to be harmful for it will mark a return to the praiseworthy stories contained in the Qur'an and to the authentic stories of tradition. There are some, however, who take the liberty of making up stories which inspire in men the desire to worship and serve God, and claim that they seek thereby nothing but to call men to the truth. Nevertheless this is one of the baits of Satan, and there is no way to avoid lying but in truthfulness. Besides there is in what God and His Apostle said enough to render fabrication in preaching needless. Did not the Prophet abhor the affectation or rhymed prose regarding it pedantic?

On hearing his son 'Umar[1] indulge is rhymed prose, S'ad ibn-

1. A.H. 66 A.D. 685-6; See *ibn-S'ad*, Vol. V, p. 125; abul-Fida', *Mukhtasar Ta'rikh al-Bashar* (Constantinople, 1286), Vol. I, p. 205.

abi-Waqqas[1] said to him as the former sought something from his father, "This, my son, would make me hate thee; I shall not grant thee thy request until thou should cease to compose rhymed prose." The Prophet also said to 'Abdullah ibn-Rawahah[2] when the latter composed three rhymed sentences, "Beware of rhymed prose, O thou ibn-Rawahah." Consequently any rhymed prose which exceeds two sentences has been deemed affected and hence forbidden. For the same reason when (in connection with the bloodwit which should be paid for smiting a woman so that the child in her womb dies) a certain man asked, "How shall we pay a bloodwit for the death of someone who has had no drink nor food, neither has he cried nor shed any tears since such a person is not avenged?" the Prophet reproached him saying, "Art thou, like Bedouins, indulging in rhymed prose?"[3]

As to poetry, its generous use in sermons is blameworthy. God said, "It is poets whom the erring follow: Seest thou not how they rove distraught in every valley?"[4] And again, "We have not taught him (i.e. Muhammad) poetry, nor would it beseem him."[5] Furthermore, most of the poetry with which the preachers are familiar and which they are accustomed to repeat in their sermons pertains to claims of being in love, the beauty of the beloved, the joys of union with him, and the pains of separation; while the assembly comprises none but the crude among the common folk whose minds are saturated with lust and their eyes never cease from staring at fair faces. Their poetry inspires nothing in their hearts except that which their hearts already conceal, and enkindles therein the flames of lust Consequently they begin to shriek and make a show of their love. Most of this, if not all, is the result of a certain kind of corruption

1. One of the ten promised Paradise by Muhammad, one of the council of six in whose hands 'Umar left the future of the caliphate, and one of the greatest of Muslim generals during the early period of the conquests It was S'ad who conquered Persia. Died between A.H. 55 and 58/A.D. 675 adn 678. See ibn-Sa'd, Vol. III, Pt. 1, pp. 275-8.
2. A.H. 8/A.D. 629-30: ibn-Sa'd, Vol, III, Ot. 2, pp. 79-82; *Tahdhib-al-Asma'*, pp. 340-41.
3. Muslim, al-Qasamah, 11:5.
4. *Surah* XXVI: 22-45.
5. *Surah* XXXVI: 69.

Therefore no poetry should be used unless it contains a moral or a wise saying and should only be used either as evidence or for example.

The Prophet of God said, "Verily some poetry is wisdom."[1] If only the elite whose hearts are known to be absorbed in the love of God should frequent these assemblies alone, on poetry whose outward meaning dealt with people would be of any harm because, as it will be seen in the Book on Audition and Music, a person would always interpret all that he would hear according to the light which dominates his heart. Al-Junayd used to discourse before some ten people or there about and whenever the number went beyond that he would stop. Thus his circle never reached twenty in number. Once upon a time when a crowd gathered before the door of ibn-Salim's[2] house, someone requested him to address them saying, "Your followers have come." To which ibn-Salim replied. "No! these are not my followers; they are the followers of the assembly. As to my followers, they are elite."

By ecstatic utterances we mean two types of speech evolved by some of the Sufis. The first comprises long pretentious claims of excessive love (*'ishq*) of God and of union (*wisal*) which renders outward deeds superfluous until some have asserted oneness (*ittihad*) with God, the removal of the veil (*hijab*), seeing (*mushahadah*) Him with the eye (*ru'yah*), and mouth to mouth conversation. They thus say that they were told such and such and that they have said such and such and imitate thereby al-Husayn ibn-Mansur al-Hallaj[3] who was gibbeted for letting slip from his lips certain words of this type, and cite as an example his saying, "I AM THE TRUTH" (*Ana 'l-Haqq*).

1. Ibn-Majah, Adab, 41; al-Darimi, Isti'dhan, 68.
2. Abu-al-Hasan ibn-Saalim, mentioned by ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, p. 297, in the narrative on the life of abu-Talib al:Makki.
3. The great mystic theologian: he was gibbeted on Dhu-al-Qa'dah 24, 309/ March 26, 922, and finally was decapitated and burnt. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 261-3.

Similarly, it has been related that abu-Yazid al-Bastami[1] once said, "Praise be to me! Praise be to me!" This is, in truth, a type of speech which, to the common folk, is of great harm, so much so that several farmers have relinquished their farms and proclaimed similar claims. Such speech, moreover, is attractive to human nature for it offers relief from work as well as self-justification through the attainment of certain stations (*maqamat*) and the experience of certain states (*ahwal*). Consequently, the ignorant do not fail to claim these things for themselves nor to swallow up such confused and embellished words. And no matter how much their claims are disapproved they do not hesitate to say that such disapproval has been the outcome of knowledge and disputation, the one is a veil and the other is the work of the self, while their words are not understood except from within through revelation by the light of the Truth. These and similar other words have spread like fire in the land and their harm to the common folk has become great. To destroy the person who comes out with such words is, according to the religion of God, better than sparing ten lives.

As to abu-Yazid al-Bistami what has been ascribed to him of such words cannot be true. Even if he were heard saying them, most probably he must have been repeating to himself words about God; for example he might have been heard quoting the words of God, "Verily, I am God: there is no God but Me: therefore worship Me."[2] These words should not have been taken in any other way besides that of a quotation.

The second type of ecstatic utterance comprises unintelligible words with pleasing externals of which some, through awesome, are useless. They may be of two kinds: The first and the more common comprises words unintelligible to the author who utters them because of the perplexity in his own mind and the confusion in his imagination

1. Also al-Bistami; (A.H. 261 or 264/A.D. 875 or 878). See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 429: al-Hujw-ri, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, tr. R.A. Nicholson (Leyden, 1911), pp. 106-8: al-Sha'rani *al-Taabaqat al-Kubra* (Cairo, 1343), Vol. I, pp. 61,2.
2. *Surah* XX: 14.

resulting from his ignorance of the exact meaning of words which he hears; while the second represents words which may be intelligible to their author who, however, because of his insufficient practice in science and his lack of instruction in rhetoric, is unable to convey them to others through language which can express his thoughts. Such words are of no use except to confuse the heart, amaze the mind, and perplex the understanding. They are also apt to convey a meaning other than that for which they are intended so that anyone may find in them the meaning which his own nature may desire.

The Prophet said, "Never does any one of you relate a tradition which is beyond the ability of the audience to understood without becoming a cause of corruption among them." And again, "Communicate with people in terms known to them and discard those which are unknown. Do you desire to see God and His Apostle disbelieved?" This has been said of words which the author understands but fails to convey their meaning to the mind of his audience. How then would it be with words whose meaning neither the author nor the audience understand when those which the former understands while his audience do not are forbidden to relate?

Jesus said, "Entrust not wisdom to those unworthy of it lest ye do it injustice; nor withhold it from those who are worthy of it lest ye do them injustice. Be ye therefore like the skilful physician who applies the medicine to the sore spot."[1] And according to another version, "Whoever should entrust wisdom to those unworthy of it would reveal his ignorance, and whosoever should withhold it from those who are worthy of it would perpetrate an injustice. Verily wisdom hath a right as well as a people worthy of it. Give, therefore, each his right."[2]

As to heresies (*tammat*), they comprise, besides what we have already mentioned under the ecstatic utterances (*shath*) another thing characteristic of them, namely, the dismissal of the obvious and literal meaning of words in favour of an esoteric interpretation of

1. *Cf.* Matt. 7:6,9: 16-17.
2. *Cf.* Matt. 11:19: Luke 7:35.

worthless value such as the Batinite[1] method of interpretation which is unlawful and of great harm; because when words are given other than their literal meanings, without either the authority of the traditions of the Prophet or the dictates of reason, the loss of faith in words becomes inevitable and the benefits of the words of God and His Apostle are in consequence nullified. Little trust can be placed in whatever is understood therefrom while its esoteric meaning cannot be determined; rather opinions differ therein and it is open to many interpretations. This too belongs to those widespread and very harmful innovations. The authors of those innovations have sought nothing but the unusual because human nature is fond of the strange and the unusual and delights in anything uncommon.

Through this very thing were the Batinites successful in destroying all the law, by interpreting its letter to conform to their way of thinking as we have shown in the *Mustazhiri Book*[2] which was composed for the purpose of refuting their views.

An example of the interpretations put forth by these heretics may be seen in the assertion of one of them that in the verse where God addresses Moses saying, "Go unto Pharaoh, for he hath trespassed,"[3] the word Pharaoh stands for the heart of Moses, the heart being the trespasser against every man. Again when God said to Moses, "Go, cast down thine staff"[4] the word staff is said to represent anything besides God on which man may depend [and in which he may place his trust], and should therefore be cast away. The same kind of interpretation is applied to the words of the Prophet when he said, "Go, eat the daybreak meal (*sahr*), for therein lies blessing."[5] These words are interpreted to mean the asking of God's forgiveness at daybreak. They set forth similar interpretations thereby tampering with

1. On the Batinite. see al-Shahrastani, pp. 147-52: al-Baghdadi, *Mukhtasar Kitab al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*. ed. P.K. Hitti (Cairo, 1924), pp. 170-6.
2. So named after the Caliph al-Mustazhir (A.D. 1094-1118) on whose request it was composed. It is also known as, *Fud'ih al-Batin yah*. It was edited together with a German translation by I. Glodziher (Leyden, 1916).
3. *Surah* LXXIX: 17.
4. *Cf Surahs* VII: 114: XXVII: 10: XXVIII: 31.
5. *Al-Tirmidhi* Sawm, 17. *al Darimi*. Siyam. 9.

the literal meaning of the whole Quran and altering its interpretation which has come down to us on the authority of ibn-'Abbas and other learned men.

Some of these interpretations are obviously and completely corrupt, as is, for example, the interpretation of the word Pharaoh to mean heart. Pharaoh was real and historical and so was Moses' summons to him. He was like abu-Jahl,[1] abu-Lahab,[2] and other of the unbelievers, and in no way like either the demons or the angels who are not perceived by the senses, and whose names are, therefore, open to interpretation. Similarly to interpret the occasion of the eating of the daybreak meal as the time for asking God's forgiveness is equally corrupt. The Prophet used to eat the daybreak meal and say, "Come, eat the daybreak meal: Gather for the blessed dinner." The corrupt nature of such interpretation is determined both by the testimony of tradition and by that of the senses, while others which pertain to objects beyond the realm of the senses are probably the same. All, besides being unlawful, are also the cause of confusion and corruption to people in their religion. Nothing of these interpretations, has come down to us on the authority of either the Companions, or their followers [*al-tabiun*], or even al-Hasn al-Basri, in spite of his continual teaching and preaching among men.

There appears, therefore, no other meaning for the words of the Prophet when he said, "Whoever should explain the Qur'an in accordance with his own opinion will occupy his place in Hell,"[3] than the following: when a person is intent upon establishing and proving something he will drag in proofs from the Qur'an and will apply them to his point without the existence of any linguistic or historical evidence which justifies his contention. This, however, does not mean that the Qur'an should not be explained through intelligence

1. One of Muhammad's most bitter opponents. He once threatened to set his foot on the Prophet's neck when prostrate in prayer. See *Surah* XCVI: 9-19: bn-Hisham, pp. 190-91.
2. An uncle of the Prophet and one of his most violent enemies. See *Surah* CXI: ibn-Hisham, pp. 231 see: 244, 430, 461.
3. *Al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 1.

and thinking, since some verses have been given by the Companions and the commentators five, six and even seven interpretations, all of which, it is well known, were not heard from the Prophet. Some of these interpretation may be contradictory, incapable of reconciliation, and are therefore ascertained only through keen understanding and profound thinking. For this reason the Prophet prayed for ibn-'Abbas saying, "O God! Enlighten him in religion and teach him interpretation"[1] Therefore whoever allows the perpetrators of heresies such interpretations in spite of his knowledge that the words do not possess any such meaning claiming that he only intends thereby the exhortation of men to follow God, would be like the person who allows attributing false and fabricated sayings to the prophets relative to things which, in themselves, are true but concerning which the law handed down no legislation, or like him who coins a *hadith* to cover anything which he deems right. Such a thing is decidedly a transgression and a cause of confusion as well as a sin which merits and incurs the threat implied in the words of the Prophet when he said, "Whoever should deliberately lie to me, would occupy his place in Hell."[2] Indeed, the interpretation of these words in such a manner is greater transgression because it undermines the faith in the meaning of words and destroys altogether the only way by which they could be understood and be useful.

You have thus learned how Satan has diverted men from seeking the praiseworthy science to the study of the blameworthy. This is all the result of the ambiguity caused by the changes in the names of the sciences which the teachers of falsehood have effected. If you would follow them depending on the prevalent significations of these terms at the present time regardless of what they signified during the first century, you would be like him who sought the honour which is the reward of wisdom by attaching himself to anyone who is called wise (*hakim*), a term which, because of the change in the meaning of words, is at the present time applied equally to the physician, the poet, and the astrologer.

1. *Ibn-Sa'd*, Vol II, pt. 2, p. 120, 11, 3-4: *Cf. ibn-Majah*. Intro., 11: *al-Tirmidhi*, Manaqb, 42,
2. *Al-Darimi*, Intro., 25: *ibn-Majah*, Intro., 16.

The fifth term to have been altered is wisdom (*hikmah*), since we see that it has now become customary to apply the word wise (*hakim*) equally to the physician, the poet, the astrologer, and even to him who reads fortunes for the peasants who squat on street corners. Wisdom, however, is that which God commended when He said, "He giveth wisdom to whom He will: and he to whom wisdom is given, hath had much good given him"[1] The Prophet also said, "A word of wisdom which man learns is better to him than the world and all that is in it." See, therefore, what wisdom stood for and to what it has been altered, and examine, in the same way, the other terms. Beware, then, of being deceived by the ambiguities of the teachers of falsehood: their evil influence upon religion is greater than that of Satan, because through their aid does he arrive at removing religion from the hearts of men. For this reason when the Prophet was asked who were the most wicked among men he would not at first answer but said, "Forgive, O God." When his inquirers persisted in their query he replied, "The most wicked among men are the teachers of falsehood."

You have now been shown both the praiseworthy and the blameworthy sciences as well as the causes of ambiguity. Yours is the choice either to follow the example of the Fathers, or to succumb to deception and emulate those who came after.

All knowledge which the Fathers approved has vanished, while most of what people now pursue falls under the category of innovations and made-up novelties. The Prophet was right when he said, "Islam began as a strange element and will become thus again as it was at the beginning. Blessed, therefore, are the strangers." He was then asked who where the strangers to which he replied, "The strangers are those who rectify what people have corrupted of my law as well as those who revive what they have destroyed of it."[2] According to another report, "The strangers are those who hold fast to the belief which you now possess'" while according to another, "The strangers are a few righteous people in the midst of many

1. *Surah* II: 272.
2. *Cf. al-Darimi*, Riqaq, 42: *al-Tirmidhi* Iman, 13: *ibn-Majah*, Fitan, 15.

unrighteous, whose haters outnumber those who love them." The praiseworthy sciences have also grown unfamiliar and unpopular among men to the extent that those who dare mention them are despised. For this reason al-Thawri had said, "If you see a learned man who has many friends, you may be sure he is a charlatan and a faker, because if he would speak the truth, those friends would hate him."

Determining how Much is Praiseworthy [to Acquire] of the praiseworthy sciences

You should know that, in this respect, science is divided into three parts. One part is that whose knowledge is blameworthy whether it be in part or in toto. Another is that whose partial as well as total knowledge is praiseworthy; in fact the more one acquires of it the better. The third is that whose knowledge is praiseworthy within a certain limit, that of sufficiency, but beyond that it ceases to be praiseworthy: to go into it deeply is not desirable. This is best illustrated by the human body: that which is praiseworthy, whether little of it or much, is like health and beauty while that which is blameworthy, whether little of it or much, is like ugliness and bad temper. On the other hand there are things which are praiseworthy when they are found in moderation like the spending of money where extravagance is not praiseworthy although it is spending; and like courage where recklessness is undesirable although it is a type of courage. The same thing is true of knowledge.

The part whose partial and total knowledge is blameworthy is that which has no use either in the realm of religion or in the domain of life because its harmfulness exceeds its utility, such as the science of magic talismans, and astrology, parts of which are of no use whatever and to spend one's life, the most precious thing a man possesses, in them is sheer waste; and to waste anything precious is blameworthy. Other parts of these sciences are of greater harm than the good they are deemed to perform in life, which good, when compared to the harm resulting therefrom, becomes of no consequence.

The part whose knowledge, even to the limit of thoroughness, is praiseworthy is the science of knowing God, His attributes and works as well as His law which governs His creatures and His wisdom in ordaining the superiority of the hereafter to this life. The knowledge of this is incumbent upon man both for itself and also for attaining thereby the bliss of the hereafter. To exert oneself even to the utmost capacity of one's effort, falls short of what is required because it is like the sea. Its depth cannot be sounded and men can approach its shores and edges only to the extent to which it has been made possible for them, while no one has navigated its ends except the prophets, the saints, and those who are grounded in the science of God — each according to his rank and ability and according to what God has preordained for them therein. This is the hidden science which is never recorded in books but whose knowledge may be at first promoted by learning and by contemplating the states of the learned man in the science of the hereafter whose characteristics we shall discuss later. Its knowledge may be furthered[1] through self-mortification, discipline, and through purifying the heart and freeing it from the affairs of this world as well as through emulating the prophets and the saints so that it may be revealed to every seeker in proportion to God's mercy (*rizq*) on him rather than in proportion to his efforts and labours (*jahd*). Yet diligence in it is indispensable for self-mortification which is the sole key to guidance.

The sciences whose knowledge is praiseworthy up to a certain limit are those which we have already mentioned under the sciences the acquisition of whose knowledge is a *fard kifayah*[2]. Every one of these sciences has three stages: first limitation (*iqtisid*) which is the intermediary, and third thoroughness (*istiqsi*) which is a sequel to moderation and which goes on and on during the entire life of the seeker. Be, therefore, one of two: either one who educates himself, or one who concerns himself with the education of others after he had educated himself. Never, however, concern yourself with reforming others before you have first reformed yourself. If you are educating

1. In text "furthered in the hereafter".
2. See *Supra*, p. 36.

yourself take up only those branches of knowledge which have been required of you according to your needs, as well as those which pertain to the outward deeds such as learning the elements of prayer, purification, and fasting. More important, however, is the science which all have neglected, namely, the science of the attributes of the heart, those which are praiseworthy and those which are blameworthy, because people persist in the latter such as miserliness, hypocrisy, pride, and conceit and the like, all of which are destructive and desisting therefrom is obligatory. Performing those outward deeds is like the external application of ointment to the body when it is stricken with scabies and boils while neglecting to remove the pus by means of surgery[1] or purge. False scholars recommend outward deeds just as fake physicians prescribe external ointments for virulent internal diseases. The learned men of the hereafter recommend nothing but the purification of the inner-self and the removal of the elements of evil by destroying their nursery-beds and uprooting them from the heart. It is only because of the ease which characterizes the works of the senses and the difficult nature of the works of the heart that most people have neglected the purification of their hearts and devoted themselves to the outward deeds, just as he who finds it disagreeable to drink a bitter medicine resorts to the external application of ointments and persists in his labours, continually increasing the ingredients, while his ailments multiply. If, therefore, you are desirous of the hereafter, seeking salvation and running away from eternal damnation, pursue the science of spiritual (*batinah*) diseases and their remedies, as we have described it in the Quarter on the Destructive Matters in Life, which will lead you to the praiseworthy stations mentioned in the Quarter on the Saving Matters in Life; because no sooner is the heart purged from what is blameworthy than it is filled with that which is praiseworthy just as the soil where all kinds of plants and flowers would grow as soon as the grass is weeded out — unless the weeds are removed neither plants nor flowers would grow. Therefore do not pursue those branches of knowledge whose acquisition is a *fard kifayah* especially

1. Lit. bleeding.

when they have already been taken up by some. He who would spend himself in pursuing what would reform others [while he himself remains unredeemed] is insolent and how utterly foolish is the man who, when snakes and scorpions have crept beneath his clothes, is busy looking for a whisk wherewith to drive flies off other people, a task which will neither spare nor save him from the attacks of the snakes and scorpions lurking beneath his clothes. If on the other hand you have completed the task of purifying yourself and have been successful in abstaining from outward and inward sin so that purity of the heart and abstinence from sin have become to you a religion and a second nature, which thing is very unlikely, then you may pursue those branches of knowledge whose acquisition is *fard kifayah*. You should, however, observe gradual progress therein beginning with the Book of God, then the Usage of His Apostle, then the science of interpretation and the other sciences of the Qur'an such as that of the abrogating and the abrogated (*al-nasikh w-al-mansukh*),[1] the related and the unrelated (*al-mawsul w-al-mafsal*)[2] and the clear and the ambiguous (*al-muhkam w-mutashabih*)[3]. The same gradual procedure should be observed in the study of the Usage of the Prophet after which you may proceed to the study of applied jurisprudence (*furu'*) which is the elaboration of positive law under the wider science of jurisprudence. You then may proceed to the sources of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) and to the other sciences as far as the span of life permits and time allows. Do not spend, however, all your life in one of these sciences seeking to exhaust the subject thoroughly, because knowledge is of varied and numerous branches and life is short. Furthermore these sciences are only introductory means sought not for themselves but for the sake of something else and in everything which is sought as a means for the attainment of another thing, one should not loose sight of the end. Limit yourself, then, in the study of vernacular speech, to that which would enable you to understand and speak the Arab tongue and in the study of the strange words confine

1. See al-Suyuti, *al-Itaan fi-Ulum al-Qur'an* (Cairo, 1343). Vol. II, pp. 20-27.
2. *Ibid* Vol. I, pp. 90-91.
3. *Cf. Surah* III; 5; Al-Suyuti, *Itqan*, Vol. II, PP. 2-13.

your efforts to those occurring in the Qur'an and the tradition; even then avoid going into them profoundly. As to syntax, limit yourself also to what pertains to the Qur'an and the tradition, since in every branch of knowledge there are three degrees of acquisition, namely limitation, moderation, and thoroughness. We shall here describe each of these three as they relate to the science of tradition, interpretation, jurisprudence, and theology in order to offer a standard with which other subjects may be measured.

The limited degree of acquisition in interpretation covers about twice the size of the Qur'an, i.e., similar to *al-Wajiz*[1] which 'Ali al-Wahidi al-Naysabari[2] composed; the moderate degree is equivalent to three times the size of the Qur'an, i.e., similar to *al-Wasil*[3] by the same author. Beyond these two degrees of acquisition is that of thorough exhaustion which can be dispensed with; the entire lifetime may expire in its pursuit.

In tradition the limited degree is represented by the mastery of the two *Sahihs*[4] as corrected by one well-informed in the science of the texts of tradition. As to the authorities of the two *Sahihs*, those who preceded you have spared you the trouble and you may depend on their books for that information. Nor need you memorize the texts of the two *Sahihs* but familiarize yourself with them so that you may be able, when the need arises, to lay your hand on whatever you may want. The moderate degree of acquisition in the field of the *hadith* includes, besides, the two *Sahihs*, the other authoritative corpuses.[5]

1. *Al-Wajtz fi Tafsir al-Quran al-Aziz* printed in Cairo, A.H. 1305.
2. A.H. 468/A.D. 1076: see ibn-Khallikan. Vol. II. pp. 8-9.
3. *Al-Wasit bayn al-Aaqbud w-al-Basit* unpublished: see Hajj Khalifah Vol. VI, oo. 436-7; W. Ahlwardt, *Verzichniiss der Arabischen Handschrften der Koniglichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin. 1887-99), Nos. 750-2.
4. That of *al-Bukhari* and that of *Muslim*; Printed several times.
5. These are the six authoritative corpuses which comprise, besides the two *Sah ihs*, the following: The *Sunan* of abu-Dawud al-Sijstani (A.H. 275 A.D. 888), printed in Cairo. A.H. 1280; the *Sunan* of ibn-Majah (A.H. 273/A.D.887), printed in Cairo, A.H. 1340; the *Sahih* of al-Tirmidhi (A.H. 279 A.D. 892), printed in Cairo, A.H. 1290; and the *Aujtaba* of al-Nastt'i, (A.H. 303 A.D. 915), lithographed in Delhi, A.H. 1315.

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Beyond this is thorough exhaustion of the subject which requires the detailed mastery of all traditions including weak (*duaif*) traditions, [about whose authenticity serious doubts can be raised], the strong (*qawi*), [those utterly faultless traditions in whose *isnad* there is no weakness and whose tendency does not contradict any generally prevalent belief], the genuine (*sahih*) [fulfilling all conditions], and the corrupt (*saqim*), as well as knowing the several ways of *hadith* transmission with knowledge of the qualification of each authority, his names and characteristics.

As to jurisprudence, the limited degree of acquisition is equivalent to the contents of the *Mukhtasar*[1] of al-Muzani[2] which work we rearranged in our *Khulasat al-Mukhtasar*;[3] the moderate degree is three times as long and is equivalent to the material we have included in our *al-Wasit min al-Madhhab*:[4] while the degree of thoroughness is represented by our *al-Basit*[5] and by other comprehensive works.

As to theology (*al-Kalam*), it is solely designed to safeguard the articles of faith which the followers of the Usage of the Prophet and righteous Fathers transmitted down to us, and nothing else. Anything beyond this would be an attempt to reveal the truth of things in other than its proper way. The purpose of learning the Usage of the Prophet is to attain, through a concise creed, the limited degree of its knowledge. This is equivalent to the contents of the Book on the

Contd. To these six may be added the *Muwatta'* of Malik ibn-Anas (A.H. 179, A.D. 795), printed several times; the *Musand* of al-Darimi (A.H. 225 A.D. 869) printed in Damascus, A.H. 1349; and the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn-Hanbal (A.H. 241. A.D.855), (first three volumes printed in Cairo d.).

1. *Al-Mukhtasar al-Saghir*, printed in Bulaq, A.H. 1321-6.
2. Abu-Ibrahim Isma'il ibn-Yahya (A.H. 264, A.D. 878); see *al-Fihrist* p. 212; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. 1, pp. 124-5.
3. Unpublished; see al-Subki, Vol. IV, p. 116, I.5.
4. Unpublished; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. p. 246; *Fihrist al-Kutub al-Arab yah al-Mahfuzah bi-al-Kutubhanah al-Hlidaywiyah*, Vol. III Carro, 1306), pp. 289-90. (Henceforth will be referred to as Cairo Catalogue.
5. Unpublished; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, p. 246; *Cairo Catalogue*, Vol. IIL, pp. 1978.

Articles of Faith which is a part of this work.[1] The moderate degree would equal about a hundred leaves representing the contents of our work, *al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad*,[2] and is indispensable in debating innovators and answering their heresies with what will remove and destroy their influence over the heart of the common man. This is of use among the common people only before their fanaticism becomes far gone, because no mere words would convince the innovator once he had acquired a smattering of the science of argumentation. Even if you silence him in arguments, he would not relinquish his ideas but would protest his inability in debates asserting that your argument can be met although he himself is incapable of it and he only was confused by your debating acumen.

Furthermore when the common men, through some kind of an argument, have been diverted from the truth, it is quite possible, while their fanaticism in these errors is still not far gone, to bring them back to it through similar arguments. But if fanaticism becomes rooted in their hearts their redemption becomes hopeless because fanaticism fastens beliefs deeply to the minds of men. It is one of the evils of the teachers of falsehood who go to excess in their fanaticism for the truth and regard with contempt and scorn all non-conformists. This drives the nonconformists to further spite and encourages them to seek the support of falsehood. Interest in holding fast to their position is thereby strengthened. If, instead, these fanatics would approach their opponents privately in a spirit of kindness, sympathy, and advice rather than attack them publicly in the spirit of bigotry and acrimony, they might succeed in their effort. But whereas prestige requires a following and nothing attracts a following better than bigotry, cursing and vilifying of opponents, they have adopted fanaticism as their rule of conduct and their method of approach. Finally they call this a defence of religion and a protection for the Muslims, while in fact it results in nothing but the destruction of all people and in the firm establishment of innovation in their minds.

1. It comprises Bk. II of the Quarter on the Acts of Worship; see *infra*; cf. Hajji Khalifah, Vol. IV, p. 575.
2. Printed in Cairo, 2nd ed., A.H. 1327.

Beware, therefore, of coming near these controversies that have sprung up in these recent times and on which have been written masterpieces of publications, compositions and argumentations the like of which have neither been seen nor heard by the Fathers. Avoid them as you avoid deadly poison for they are like a virulent disease. It was these controversies which have driven all jurisprudents after rivalry and boasting which will be discussed later together with their hazards and evils.

You may hear it said: "Men are the enemies of things they do not know." Do not, however, accept this as law. You have stumbled upon one who knows; accept, therefore, this advice from one who has wasted his life in [controversies] and surpassed the ancients in composition, research, argumentation, and exposition until God inspired him with His righteousness and made known to him the flaws therein. Consequently he abjured controversies and turned his attention to himself. Do not be deceived by the words of those who say that the giving off legal opinions is the pillar of the law, but know not its principles except through the science of argumentation, while the principles of religion are contained in the books of religion and whatever accretions are added thereto are nothing but wranglings which neither the ancients nor the Companions, who were better versed in the principles of legal opinions than any other group, had known. These wranglings are not only useless for the science of religion, but are also harmful and corrupting to one's taste and judgement in jurisprudence. Thus in most cases it is usually not possible to have a decision, backed by the opinion of a judge whose good taste in legal matters is established, conform to the rulers of debate. Whoever is familiar with the syllogisms of controversy will submit to the rules of debater rather than follow legal taste. Only those who seek repute and prestige and feign that they are striving after the principles of religion pursue controversy in which they spend their lifetime without making the slightest effort towards the science of religion. You need not fear the Devil but beware of men who have relieved the Devil of the task of tempting and misleading people.

In sum, what is acceptable among the wise is to assume that you are alone with God in this universe while before you lie death, resurrection, judgement, Paradise and hell. Consider then what concerns you of all these and ignore the rest.

A certain Sheikh saw in a dream one of the learned men and said to him, "What has happened to those sciences in which you used to argue and debate?" The learned man, stretched the palm of his hand open and, blowing over it, said: "It has all vanished like scattered dust I have not benefited except from two prostrations which I have performed in the middle of the night." According to one tradition the Prophet said, "People who have once been guided go not astray except they become afflicted with disputation."[1] He then read from the Qur'an the following verse: "They put this forth to thee only in the spirit of dispute. Yea, they are a contentious people".[2] According to a tradition the Quranic verse which begins with the words, "But they whose hearts are given to perversity,"[3] signifies the people of disputation of whom God warned saying, "Beware of them!"[4] One of the forbears declared that at the end of time there will be a people who will be denied the opportunity to work but will be free to dispute. Another tradition says, "Ye are in the midst of a time wherein ye are blessed with work but a people will appear who will be given to disputation,"[5] while in the well-known tradition we read that "God abhors most those who are given to bitter enmity."[6] Another tradition declares that "no people are ever given to logic and debate without being lost to useful work."[7]

1. *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 7:4.
2. *Surah* XLIII, 58.
3. *Surah* III:5.
4. Al-Jayahsi, No. 1432, 1433; *al-Bukhari*, *Tafsir al-Qur-an*, Al-'Imran, 2: *al-Tirmidhi*, *Tafir al-Qur'an*, Al-'Imran, 1.
5. Unidentified.
6. *Cf, al-Darimi*, Intro., 23, 29, 35.
7. Unidentified.

SECTION IV

On the reasons which induced men to persue the science of polemics and on revealing the evils of debate and disputation as well as stating the conditions which render them premissible.

You should know that after the death of the Apostle of God, the caliphate was occupied by the orthodox and guided caliphs who were *imams* of righteousness, learned in the science of God, His essence and His attributes, versed in His statutes, and independent in handing down their legal opinions and decisions. In this they did not seek the aid of jurisprudents except in very rare cases in which consultation was indispensable. They devoted themselves to the science of the hereafter and used to refer legal questions and all that pertains to human affairs in this world to one another and with their keenest effort, as the accounts of their lives reveal, they followed after God.

When at their death, the caliphate passed on those who occupied it without either merit or independence in legal opinion and decisions, the caliphs were compelled to seek the aid of jurisprudents and to attach them to themselves on all occasions in order to consult with them on the manner of their judicial decisions. A few learned followers (*tabiun*), however, who continued to emulate the orthodox caliphs and persisted in conforming to the dictates of religion, and in following the way of righteous Fathers, were still living. Whenever they were sought for appointment as judges, they would flee, disdaining altogether such honour. Consequently the caliphs were compelled to be insistent in their desire to appoint them as judges and to delegate to them the power of government. Contemporaries were thus awakened to the glory of the learned men who, while they paid no attention to the caliphs and governors, were persistently sought by

them. As a result these contemporaries turned with their efforts towards knowledge which they hoped to acquire in order to attain power and glory through the solicitation of governors. They bent themselves to the study of the science of legal opinions and offered their services to governors from whom they sought office and rewards. In this some failed while others met success, but those who were successful were not free from the obsequiousness of begging and the servility of indebtedness. Consequently the learned men, after having once been sought, have now become job seekers, and after having once been proud of their indifference to the sultans, having now become obsequious by waiting upon them. This is true of all except the few learned men of religion whom God has blessed in every age.

All that time people addressed themselves the most to the science of legal opinions and decisions because of the pressing need for it in governmental affairs. Later on, however, there emerged some celebrities and princes who had heard the pronouncements of people on the elements of faith and enjoyed listening to their arguments, and consequently found themselves well disposed to debate and disputation in theology. Thus people pursued wholeheartedly the science of theology, composed many books on the subject in which they set forth the methods of argumentation and developed the principles of contradiction, claiming all the time that their sole purpose was to defend the religion of God, safeguard the Usage of His Prophet, and to uproot all innovators, just as the jurisprudents who preceded them claimed that they devoted themselves to the legal profession and took upon themselves the affairs of the Muslims simply out of pity for God's creatures and for the sake of giving them counsel and advice.

Subsequently, however, there appeared some distinguished men who deemed it improper to discourse on theology and start a series of debates therein because such a thing would lead to bloodshed and destruction. Instead they preferred to debate in jurisprudence and to point out the more important juridical points in the systems of al-Shafi't and abu-Hanifah in particular.

Consequently men discarded theology and the other disciplines of knowledge and pursued especially problems of disagreement between al-Shafi't and abu-Hanifah, while to those between Malik, Sufyan al-Thawri, Ahmad ibn-Hanbal, and others, they paid little attention. Their purpose, they claimed, was to elicit the abstruse points of the law, determine the principles of the system, and prepare the bases of legal opinions and decisions. They composed many works on the subject and elicited many points, setting forth therein the different kinds of syllogisms of controversy and enumerating the various works that pertain thereto. Furthermore they still continue to compose at this present time; as to the future, however, we do not know what God has ordained.

This, then, is what induced men to take up nothing but controversies and debate. If, however, the rulers of this world had favoured another *imam* or another science, men would have done the same and would have persisted in saying that they were employed in the science of religion and that they had no other aim than that of drawing near to God, the Lord of the Universe.

Determining the Ambiguity which exists in Likening These Debates to the Consultations of the Companions And the Councils of the Fathers.

You should know that those who liken their debates to the consultations of the Companions cajole men by saying that their aim in those debates is to search after the truth in order that it may become apparent, especially because the truth is much desired and any co-operation in examining truth and the exchange of views therein is both helpful and telling. Furthermore, such was the custom of the Companions in their consultations, as for example, the time when they held a consultation on the case of the grandfather and the brothers,[1] the penality for drinking wine,[2] the obligation on the *imam*

1. *al-Bukhari*, Fara'id, 9: *al-Darimi*, Fara'id, 11.
2. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Hudud, 1-4; *al-Darimi*, Hudud, 9.

to pay an indemnity when he commits a mistake in his interpretation as has been reported concerning the woman who had an abortion because of the fear of 'Umar,[1] and several cases of inheritance, as well as what has been reported on the authority of al-Shafi-i, Ahmad ibn-Hanbal. Muhammad ibn-al-Hasan al-Shaybani,[2] Malik, abu-Yusuf, and other learned men besides. You will understand this ambiguity between debate and consultation when I relate to you the following, namely, that co-operation in the search after truth is a part of religion but has eight distinguishing features and conditions. These are:

1. Whereas debate as a means of searching after the truth is one of the *fard kifayah* duties, no one who has not yet fulfilled his *fard 'ayn* duties should take it up. Thus whoever has a *fard 'ayn* duty to fulfil, but addresses himself to the fulfilment of a *fard kifayah* instead, claiming that he seeks thereby the truth, is a liar; he is like the person who neglects prayer and traffics in weaving and tailoring saying that his purpose is to cover the nakedness of him who prays naked because he finds no clothes. Such a thing may occur and is quite possible just as the occurrence of the rare cases which are the subject of research in those debates is possible. Those who spend their time in debate neglect several duties which are, by general agreement, *fard 'ayn* duties. Similarly, anyone who has been expected to return a deposit to its owner at once, but, instead of so doing, seeks refuge in prayer which is the worthiest of all obligations before God, transgresses because it is not enough that a person be obedient and his works constitute acts of service unless he observes therein the rules of time, condition and sequence.

2. Debate as a means of searching after the truth is justified provided the doer is not confronted with a more important *fard kifayah* duty.

Thus whoever finds an important obligation waiting for him and turns to perform something else, transgresses. In fact he is like

1. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Diyat. 24-25.
2. A.H. 189/A.D. 804-5; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, pp. 2278.

a person who comes upon a group of people and finds them, having been neglected, about to die of thirst, but instead of saving them by giving them water to drink, buckles down to study the art of bleeding, claiming that it is a *fard kifayah* and that unless the town had a bleeder the people will perish. On being told that a number of bleeders already exist within his region and, therefore, there is no need for his services he insists that notwithstanding all this, bleeding remains a *fard kifayah*. Likewise, he who does this and neglects to give his attention to the calamity which has befallen a group of thirsty Muslims is like the person who devotes his time to debate while several *fard kifayah* duties remain neglected in the town. Thus several have taken up the profession of law (*fatwa*) while a number of obligatory duties remain neglected in every town and no jurisprudent ever pays any attention to them. More specifically let me single out medicine in which there is not, in almost all the land, a Muslim physician whose word could be legally accepted in important matters. Nevertheless not one of the jurisprudents has taken up medicine. The same is true of the Muslim obligation to enjoin what is just and to forbid what is evil[1] which is a *fard kifayah* duty.

A debater might perhaps be arguing in the midst of a hall draped with silk and among men apparelled with it, but would say nothing about it and instead would debate concerning a hypothetical case which might never come to pass, even if it should occur there would be several jurisprudents ready to attend to it. All this time he claims that he desires to come nearer to God through performing the *fard kifayah* duties. It was related by Anas that the Apostle of God was once asked, "When will the Muslim obligation of enjoining what is just and forbidding what is evil be neglected?" To which he replied, "When the best among you take to hypocrisy and the wicked, to adultery; when government shall pass to the hands of the least deserving among you and knowledge to those who are corrupt."

3. The third condition which justifies debate is that the debater should have the ability and right to form an opinion of his own (*mujtahid*), and should be one who can give decisions on his own

1. *Cf. Surah* IX: 72.

responsibility without being bound be the opinions of either al-Shafi'i or abu-Hanifah or any other *imam*, so that whenever he would find that the school of abu-Hanifah is right on a particular point he would hand down his opinion accordingly, just as the Companions and the *imams* used to do, and would ignore what the Shafi'ite school holds on the subject. On the other hand, he who lacks the right and the ability of independent interpretation (*ijtihad*), as is the case with all contemporaries, but would hand down his opinions on the authority of his *imam*, would not be able to reject the stand of another even though he should discover its weakness. Of what use to him there is debate when his system is well-known and his opinions are bound to conform to it? And whenever a doubtful point confronts him he would be compelled to say that the founder of his school might have an answer as he himself was not independent in interpreting the sources of the law. It would have been more fitting for him if his discussions were on points which lend themselves to two opinions, for then he might hand down his opinion in favour of the one and against the other and become thereby more and more disposed to one view and opposed to the other. Yet debates are not confined to this type of two-sided questions; often these are ignored in favour of cases in which the points of controversy have been fully discussed and decided.

4. The fourth condition which justifies debate is that there should be none except on actual cases or cases likely to be so. Thus the Companions held consultations only as questions arose or were likely to arise, as for example questions of inheritance. We do not, however, see debaters concerning themselves with the criticism of cases in which the handing of opinions has caused widespread tribulations. Rather they seek the spectacular cases which attract attention and consequently, no matter what the nature of the case may be, discussion of the issue becomes widespread. They may even ignore cases of frequent occurrence saying that they are reported cases or rare events which are not spectacular. That the aim of a debate should be the truth is nothing short of a miracle. They would also drop a case because it has been reported although the way to

truth is through such reports; or they might drop it because it was not spectacular and would lend itself to little discussion. Truth, however, aims at reducing debate and arriving at conclusions concisely and not flatulently.

5. The fifth condition which justifies debate is that it should be held in private in preference to public meeting in the presence of celebrities and sultans, because privacy is more conducive to understanding and its atmosphere more suitable to clear thinking. Public meetings encourage hypocrisy and make it imperative for the individual to defend himself whether he is right or wrong. It is very well-known that these public meetings and assemblies are not promoted by their devotees for the sake of God. One of them may be alone with his companion for a long period of time but will not even talk to him because there is no audience to applaud his rhetoric. He may at times try to start a discussion but for the same reason gets no response. But no sooner someone makes his appearance or a group assembles, than he will try his utmost to provoke a controversy and then monopolize the discussion.

6. The sixth condition which justifies debate is that the debater should seek thereby the truth in the same spirit as that of the person who is searching for a lost object: he does not mind whether the object is found by himself or by his aides, regards his companion a friend not an adversary, and thanks him whenever he points out a mistake to him and reveals to him the truth. Thus if he pursues one way in his search for his lost object and his companion shows him another and better way he will not criticise him but rather will thank and honour him and rejoice with him. Such were the consultations of the Companions that once upon a time, when 'Umar was addressing an assembly, a certain woman interrupted him and pointed out to him his mistake. Thereupon he said, "A woman hath hit the mark while a man hath missed." At another time a certain man asked 'Ali a question and, on receiving an answer, disagreed with him saying that it was different; to which 'Ali replied: "Thou art right while I am wrong. Exalted over all is the Omniscient God." On another occasion, abu-Musa, al-Ash'ari, then the governor of al-Kufah, was asked

concerning the fate of a man who had died fighting for God and replied that he was in Paradise. Thereupon ibn-Mas'ud contradicted abu-Musa and said that, in his opinion, the man would be in Paradise if, at his death, he has been truly sincere. Abu-Musa, concurring with the opinion of ibn-Mas'ud said, "What he hath said is the truth. Ask not my opinion when in your midst you have such an authority." Such should be the fairness and justice of a seeker after truth. Should such a thing be mentioned nowadays to the most insignificant jurisprudent, he would deny it and declare it to be improbable. He would also say that there was no need at all for the explicit mention of sincerity since everyone knows that it was a necessary requirement.

Compare, therefore, the Companions with contemporary debaters, how the latter become embarrassed and ashamed whenever the truth is determined by an adversary, and how they exert their utmost efforts trying to deny the adversary his credit, malign those who refute their opinions, and finally liken themselves to the Companions in respect of co-operation in determining the truth.

7. The seventh condition which justifies debate is that the debater should not prevent his adversary from relinquishing one argument in favour of another and one illustration in favour of a second, as the debates of the Fathers were thus carried. The debater, also, should remove from his argument all the unorthodox subtitles of dialectics whether they are relevant or irrelevant. Thus he should not, for example, say that he was under no obligation to bring this up or that such and such a statement was contradictory to your first assertion and, therefore, unacceptable because going back to truth is in itself a refutation of error and should be accepted as an argument. You also notice how all assemblies are spent in defences and debates, so much so that a debater would deduce a principle from all alleged causes, and when asked what proof he had that his conclusion was explained by that cause, he would say that that was what he had found and would tell his critic, "If you should find anything clearer and better, produce it so that I might examine it." The objecting critic would then insist that such a thing has several meanings which he himself has always known but need not go through them while the

debater would demand that they be discussed; but the critic would persist in his refusal. The debating assemblies are taken up by such questions while the poor debater does not realize that his saying that he neither knows nor remembers, and that he has no need for this or for that, is a lie against the law, because if he asserts that which he does not know simply to incapacitate his adversary he would be a wicked liar disobedient to God, any by his claim to knowledge he does not possess he would expose himself to the wrath of God. He would also have sinned even if his claims were true because he had concealed what he had known of the law. His brother Muslim had asked him in order to have things explained and examined, so that if he were right he would abide there by but if he were wrong he would have his friend point out his mistake for him and lead hm from the darkness of ignorance to the bright light of knowledge. No one will disagree that it is obligatory on the person to reveal whatever knowledge he may possess of the sciences of religion whenever he is asked about it. The meaning of his words, "I am under no obligation to bring this up," is that in the rules of dialectics, which have been developed according to the principles of human curiosity and interest in the methods of deception and battling with words, he was under no obligation to admit anything unless it was obligatory by law. By his refusal to admit in the course of his argument a point which has been brought up and which he knows is true he becomes a liar and a villain.

Examine the consultations of the Companions and the negotiations of the Fathers. Have you ever heard of anything like this in them, or have you ever seen anybody who had been prevented from relinquishing one argument in favour of another and one illustration in favour of a second, and from citing as proof an event in the life of one of the Companions after having drawn an analogy, or quoting a Quranic verse having related a tradition? On the contrary all their debates were carried on in this manner: they used to set forth and examine everything that occurred to them just as it occurred.

8. The eighth condition which justifies debate is that one should only debate with those from whom he expects to learn

something, people who arrive at their knowledge independently. Usually, however, men nowadays avoid entering into a debate with intellectual giants and celebrities for fear that their adversaries should determine the truth. They would rather debate with their inferiors in the hope of confounding them with falsehood.

Many other minute conditions, which make debate justifiable, exist besides those already mentioned; but in those eight conditions you will find how to distinguish between those who debate for the cause of God and those who debate for some other purpose. But in general you should know that he who does not struggle against and debate Satan while his heart is subject to his most virulent enemy, the Devil, by whom he is being continually dragged to his doom, but does instead debate with men in cases wherein the *mujtahid* is right, or shares with him who is right his reward, the same is a laughing stock of Satan and an example for the sincere. Thus Satan rejoices when he throws him into the darknesses of evil which we shall now enumerate and discuss.

On the Evils of Debate and the Character Destroying Influences Resulting Therefrom

You should know and be sure that debates which are designed for the purpose of overcoming and silencing an opponent as well as for displaying one's excellence and honour, bragging before men, boasting, and being contradictory, or for the sake of winning popular favour, are the source of all traits which are blameworthy before God and praiseworthy before His enemy, the Devil. Its relation to the secret sins of pride, conceit, jealousy, envy, self-justification, love of power, and others is like the relation of drinking to the sins of the flesh such as fornication, foul play, and murder. Just as the person who has been given the opportunity to choose between drinking and the other sins, deemed the former harmless and took to it only to be led by his drunkenness into committing all the other sins, so is he who succumbs to the lures of overcoming and silencing opponents in debate, and falls victim to the urge for power and boasting; these things have led him to conceal all wickedness in his bosom and stirred

in him all blameworthy traits. Proofs of the blameworthiness of all these will be discussed in the Quarter on the Destructive Matters in Life although we shall now allude to the major evils which are enkindled by debate. Of these we may enumerate the following."

One is envy: The Prophet said, "As fire consumes wood so does envy consume good deeds."[1] The debater persists in envy because at times he overcomes his adversary and other times he himself is overcome; at times his words are praised and at other times those of his opponent are applauded; and as long as there remains in all the world one known among men for his versatile knowledge and regarded by them more learned than the debater and endowed with keener insight, the debater will inevitably envy him and wish that the favours and admiration which that man enjoys might accrue to him instead.

Envy is a consuming fire; its victim is subject to torment in this world while in the world to come his torture will be more intense and painful. For this reason ibn-'Abbas said, "Take knowledge wherever ye may find it, but accept not the opinion of one jurisprudent concerning another because they are as jealous of one another as the bulls in the cattle-yard."

Another is pride and haughtiness: The Prophet said, "He who exalteth himself is humbled by God, and he who humbleth himself is exalted by God."[2] Said he again quoting God, "Pride is my mantle and grandeur, yea it is my cloak. I shall smite anyone who would contest my sole right to them."[3]

The debater persists in exalting himself above his equals and peers and in claiming for himself a station higher than his worth to the extent that he and his colleagues fight over their seats in assembly halls and boast about the degree of their elevation or lowliness as well as their proximity to, or remoteness from the central seat. They would fight as to who should lead the way in narrow streets. Often the

1. *Abu-Dawud*, Adab, 44; *ibn-Majah*, Zuhd, 22:3.
2. *Cf. ibn-Majah*, Zuhd, 16:3; Matt, 22:12; Luke 14: 11, 18:14.
3. See *ibn-Majah*, Zuhd, 16:2.

foolish, deceitful, and insolent among them justify themselves on the ground that they are thereby maintaining the dignity of knowledge because the believers has been charged not to object himself. They thus consider humility, which God and his prophets commended, abasement, and regard pride, which is reprehensible to God, the dignity of religion. In other words they have altered the signification of these terms for the confusion of people as they have altered the signification of other terms such as wisdom, knowledge and the like.

Another is rancour from which a debater is hardly ever free. The Prophet said, "The believer is free from rancour." Several more traditions have been related in condemnation of rancour and they are well-known. Yet we do not know of a debater who, is capable of entertaining no rancour against anyone who would nod his head in approval of the words of his adversary, or who when the latter pauses in the midst of a sentence, would politely wait for him. On the contrary he would, whenever he is confronted with such a situation, entertain and foster rancour in his heart. He may attempt to restrain himself hoping thereby to disguise his feelings; but, in most cases, he fails as his feelings invariably reveal themselves. How can he refrain from rancour when it is inconceivable that all the audience should unite in favouring his argument and approve all his conclusions and deductions? Furthermore should his opponent show the least sign of inconsideration about what he was saying, he would entertain for him in his heart a hatred that would last throughout his life.

Another is backbiting which was likened by God to the eating of carrion.[1]

The debater persists in "eating carrion" and is continually referring to the words of his opponent and traducing him. Because he endeavours to be right in what he says about his opponent, he inevitably cites only what shows the weaknesses of his opponent's argument and the flaws in his excellences. Of such is traducing and backbiting, while lying is sheer calumny.

The debater, moreover, cannot keep his tongue from attacking

1. *Cf. Surah* XLIX: 12.

the honour of anyone who turns away from him and listens to his opponent. He would even ascribe to him ignorance, foolishness, lack of understanding, and stupidity.

Another is self-justification; God said, "Assert not then your own purity. He best knoweth who feareth Him."[1] A certain wise man was once asked, "What truth is reprehensible?" He replied, "A man's praising himself [even though it be justified]." A debater is never free from praising himself and boasting of his power, triumph, and excellence over his peers. In the course of a debate he would repeatedly say, "I am fully aware of all such things," and "I am versatile in science, of independent judgment on question of law, and well-versed in the knowledge of tradition," and many other assertions besides with which he would sing his own praise, sometimes out of sheer arrogance and at other times out of the need to render his words convincing. It is also well-known that arrogance and self-praise are by law and reason condemned.

Another is spying and prying into the private affairs of men. God said, "Pry not."[2] The debater always seeks to uncover the errors of his peers and continually pries into the private affairs of his opponents. He would, when informed of the arrival in town of another debater, seek someone who could reveal the inside story of the man and would by means of a questionnaire attempt to bare his vices in order to expose and disgrace him whenever the need should arise. He even would inquire about the affairs of his early life and blemishes of his body in the hope of discovering some defect or disfigurement such as scalp pustule and the like. Should he fear defeat at the hands of his opponent, he would, in the course of the debate, allude to these blemishes, especially if his opponent should remain firm and stand his ground, and would not refrain from being outspoken if he were given to insolence and scorn. Both of these practices are regarded as clever ways of repelling the attacks of an opponent, as should be seen by the accounts of the debates of some of the illustrious and celebrated debaters.

1. *Surah* LIII: 33 2. *Surah* XLIX: 12.

Another is to rejoice at the injury of others and feel depressed when they are glad. Anyone who does not desire for his brother Muslim what he desires for himself is far removed from the way of believers.[1] Thus he who prides himself by parading his excellence is inevitably pleased at the injury of his peers and equals who vie with him for glory. The hatred which exists between them is like that which exists between fellow-wives. Just as the one wife would tremble and turn pale at the sight of her fellow-wife so would a debater at the sight of another: his colour would change and his mind become perplexed as though he had seen a mighty devil or a hungry lion. How unlike the companionship and friendliness which used to exist between the learned men of religion whenever they met is this, and how unlike the brotherhood, the co-operation, and the mutual sharing which were characteristic of them under fair and adverse conditions alike! Thus al-Shafi'i said, "Among the virtuous and wise, knowledge is like a bond of blood relationship." I cannot, therefore, understand how some men, among whom knowledge has engendered a deep-rooted enmity, have followed his rite. Or can you ever imagine any spirit of friendliness prevailing among them when they are concerned with achieving triumph and boasting of it? How unlikely! It is bad enough that such an evil fastens on you the traits of the deceitful and robs you of those of the believers and devout.

Another is deception, the evidence of whose blameworthiness is well known and need not be enumerated. Debaters are compelled to deception because when they meet their opponents, friends, or followers, they find it necessary to endear themselves to them by saying nice things which they do not mean, by feigning to have been anxious to meet them, and by pretending to be impressed by their station and position, while everyone present as well as the speakers and those to whom they have spoken to, know that the whole thing is untrue, false, fraudulent, and wicked. They profess their love with their tongues while their hearts seethe with hate. From it all we seek refuge in God.

1 *Cf.* al-Bukhari, Iman, 6

The Prophet also said, "When people take to knowledge and ignore works, when they profess love to one another with their tongue and nurse hatred in their hearts, and when they sever the ties of relationship which bind them, God will visit His wrath upon them and curse them, He will render their tongues mute and their eyes blind." The truth of this tradition, which was related by al-Hasan, has been verified as these conditions which it predicts have been witnessed and seen.

Another is to resist truth and detest it and to persist in disputing it so much so that the most hateful thing to a debater is to see the truth revealed by his opponent; no matter what it may be, he would do his best to refute and deny it and would exert his utmost in deception, trickery and fraud in order to disprove his adversary until contention becomes in him a second nature. He is thus unable to hear anything without immediately expressing his objection to it. This habit of his would even drive him to dispute the truths of the Qur'an and the words of tradition and would cause hm to cite the one in contradiction of the other. Furthermore wrangling even in opposing wrong is prohibited since the Prophet called men to abjure it although they are right in their contention. He thus said, "Whoever was in error and should abjure wrangling, to him God would build a dwelling in the confines of Paradise; while whoever was in the right and should abjure wrangling, to him God would prepare a habitation in the heart of Paradise."[1] God has also regarded as equal those who devise lies against God and those who call the truth a lie. He said, "But who acteth more wrongfully than he who deviseth a lie against God, or calls the truth when it hath come to him, a lie?"[2] and again, "And who acteth more wrongfully than he who lieth against God and treateth the truth when it comes to him as a lie."[3]

Another is hypocrisy and flattering people in an effort to win their favour and mislead them. Hypocrisy is that virulent disease which, as will be discussed in the Book on Hypocrisy,[4] leads to the

1. *Cf.* ibn-Majah Intro., 7: 7.
2. *Surah* XXIX: 68.
3. *Surah* XXXX: 33.
4. See the Quarter on the Destructive Matters of Life, Bk. VIII.

gravest of the major sins. The debater wants nothing but to put himself forward before people, and to gan their approval and praise.

These ten traits are among the greatest secret sins. Others, who lack restraint may engage in controversies leading to the exchange of blows, kicking, boxing, tearing garments, plucking beards, cursing parents, denouncing teachers, and outright slander. Such people, however, are not considered respectable human beings. The prominent and sober among them do not go beyond the preceding ten traits. One may be free of this or that trait with regard to his inferiors or superiors, whatever the case may be, or with regards to people outside his community or his sphere of work. Yet in his attitude towards his peers, who are equal to him in position, the debater is guilty of all these traits. Each of these ten traits may give rise to ten other vices which we shall neither discuss nor explain at the present time. They include snobbishness, anger, hatred, greed, the desire to seek money and power in order to attain triumph, boasting, gaiety, arrogance, exalting the wealthy and those in authority as well as frequenting their places and partaking of their unlawful riches, parading with horses, state-coaches, and outlawed garments, showing contempt to people by being vain and ostentatious, meddling in the affairs of others, talkativeness, the disappearance of awe, fear, and mercy from the heart, absent-mindedness to an extent that the worshipper would no longer be aware of what he had prayed, or read, or who had communed with him during his prayer, nor, despite the fact that he had spent his life in the study of those sciences which aid in debate but are useless in the hereafter, such as the embellishment of diction and the knowledge of singular anecdotes, would he be able to experience any feeling of humility in his heart.

These traits are common to all debaters although they have them in varying degrees each according to his own station. But everyone, even the most religious and the wisest among them, is subject to several of then. Everyone, too, hopes to conceal them and, by self-mortification, to free himself therefrom.

You should, moreover, know that these vices characterize

those employed in admonition and warning if their purpose is to be recognized and establish for themselves prestige, or to obtain wealth and position. They also characterize those who are working in the science of religion and legal opinions if they ever hope to secure a position in the department of justice or become trustees of mortmain properties (*awqaf*) or to excel their peers. In general, these vices characterize everyone who, through knowledge, seeks other than the reward of God in the hereafter.

Knowledge, therefore, would either doom its possessor to eternal destruction or lead him to life everlasting. For that reason the Prophet said, "The most severely punished of all men on the day of resurrection will be the learned man whom God has not blessed with His knowledge." On the contrary how much better it would have been if he had come out at least even. This, however, is very unlikely because the dangers of knowledge are great, for he who seeks it seeks the everlasting kingdom and the eternal bliss which he will either attain or else be doomed to perdition. The seeker after knowledge is like him who seeks power in this world: if he does not succeed in amassing a fortune he cannot hope to be spared the humiliation of poverty. On the contrary, he will continue to live in the midst of the worst conditions. To say that in encouraging debate lies an advantage, namely, that of inducing people to seek knowledge since without ambition for power and the rivalry which it provokes all branches of knowledge would have vanished, is true in one respect but otherwise useless. Thus had it been for their expectation of playing at the ball and mallet[1] and with birds,[2] the school would not have been attractive to the boys. But this does not mean that the reasons for the school's popularity are praiseworthy. Similarly in the case of ambition for power as the reason for the preservation of knowledge: it does not mean that the ambitious one is saved. On the contrary he is one of those whom the Prophet described when he said, "Verily God will establish this faith through men who have no faith."[3] And again,

1. *Al-Kurah w-al-Sawlajan.*
2. Unidentified game.
3. *Hikyat al-Awliya*, Vol. II, p. 358.
4. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Maghazi, 40:7; Qadar,5.

"Verily God will establish this faith through wicked men."[1] The ambitious is personally doomed to destruction although, through him, others may be saved, especially if he should urge people to forsake the world and in so doing outwardly resemble the learned Fathers while inwardly he conceals his ambitions. He is, in this respect, like the candle which burns itself out in order that others may see: the good of others lies in his own destruction. On the other hand if he should urge people to cherish this world he would be like the fire which, besides consuming everything, burns itself out as well.

The learned men are of three kind: First those who are outspoken in seeking this world and in their devotion to it they destroy both themselves and others. Second, those who call people to God in public and in private; they bring joy and gladness both to themselves and to those whom they call. Third, those who preach the hereafter, outwardly forsaking the world while inwardly seeking the approval of men and wordly prestige; they save others but destroy themselves.

Examine therefore to which of these three categories you belong and to what end have you been preparing yourself, and do not think that God would accept anything of knowledge and work which has not been consecrated to Him. Any doubts which you may have in this regard will be dispelled by the contents of the Book on Hypocrisy, in fact by all the contents of the Quarter on the Destructive Matters in Life.[2]

1. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Maghazi, 40: 7, Qadar, 5.
2. See Vol. III, Bk. III.

SECTION V

On the Proprieties of the Student and the Teacher.

The formal proprieties and duties of the student are many but may be classified under ten headings:

The first duty of the student is to purify his soul from impure traits and blameworthy characteristics because knowledge is the worship of man's heart as well as the prayer of his inmost self (*sirr*) and the oblation of his inward being before God. Just as prayer, which is the duty of the physical senses, is not fulfilled unless the physical body has been purified from excrements and impurities, so is the worship of the inward being as well as the reformation of the heart: they are not fulfilled through knowledge unless they first be cleansed from impurities and uncleanliness. Thus the Prophet said, "Religion has been built on cleanliness." This is true physically and spiritually. God said, "Verily the polytheists are unclean..."[1] as a reminder to the mind that purity and uncleanliness are not confined to the externals which are perceived by the senses. Thus the polytheist may be physically clean and immaculately dressed yet he is inwardly unclean, i.e., his inward being reeks with impurities. Uncleanliness is a word which represents that which is avoided and from which people desire to stay away. It is more important to avoid the impurities of the heart than to avoid physical impurities because, besides their abomination in this world, the impurities of the heart are fatal in the world to come. For this reason the Prophet said, "The angels do not enter into a house where there are dogs or images."[2] The heart is the house of the angels, the place on which they descend and

1. *Surah* IX: 28.
2. *Al-Tirmidhi*, Adab, 44: *al-Darimi*, Isti,dhan, 34.

in which they abide, while bad traits like anger, lust, rancour, envy, pride, conceit and the like are barking dogs. How then could the angels enter the heart when it is crowded with dogs? Besides, the light of knowledge is not made to shine upon the heart of man except through the instrumentality of the angels, and it is not possible for any man to have any communication with God except through revelation or through a veil or through a messenger whom God sends and instructs to declare His will. Similarly whatever knowledge is sent by the grace of God to the human heart is transmitted by the angels who have been entrusted (*muwaooolun*)[1] with this responsibility. They are the angels who have been made holy, pure, and free from all blameworthy traits. They attend to no one but the good, and with what they possess of the mercy of God they reform no one but the pure.

I do not say that, in the above quoted tradition, the word house itself means heart and the word dog, anger as well as other blameworthy traits; but I do say that it is a suggestion. Thus there is a difference between ignoring the literal meaning of words in favour of an esoteric interpretation on the one hand and incidentally pointing out an esoteric significance while affirming the literal meaning on the other hand. This subtle point is exactly what distinguishes the Batinites from the true believers. This is the method of suggestion, which is the way of the learned and the righteous. For suggestion means that what has already been mentioned should also represent something else and consequently attention should be paid to both. Thus the wise man may witness a calamity befall someone besides himself and the calamity would serve as a warning to him, in that it would wake him up to the fact that he too is subject to calamities and that time is full of vicissitudes. Thus to turn one's attention from the examination of the affairs of others to those of his own and from those of his own to the examination of the nature of the things for the sake of learning is a praiseworthy practice. Proceed, therefore, from the consideration of the house built by God and from the consideration of the dog which has been pronounced blameworthy, not for its physical appearance

1. See Al-Qazwini *'Aja-ib*, pp. 62-3.

but for its inherent beastly characteristics and uncleanliness, to that of the animal spirit which is bestiality.

You should know, too, that he whose heart is saturated with anger, greed, indulgence, and readiness to slander people is actually a beast although he appears in the form of a human being. He who has keen insight regards the real meaning of things and not their form. In this world forms obscure the realities which lie within them, but in the hereafter forms will conform to realities and the latter will prevail. For this reason every individual will be resurrected according to his own spiritual reality; the slanderer will be resurrected in the form of a vicious dog; the greedy, a wild wolf, the haughty, a tiger, and the ambitious, a lion. Traditions have attested to this and the men of insight and discerning have testified to it.

You might say that many students of bad character have sought and acquired the knowledge of the sciences. That may be so, but how far they are from real knowledge which is useful in the hereafter and which insures happiness! Characteristic of that true knowledge is that even a rudimentary grasp of it would show that sin is a fatal and destructive poison. And have you ever seen anyone take anything which he knew to be fatally poisonous? As to what you hear from the sophists it is nothing but [spurious] traditions which they fabricate and repeat — it is no science at all. Ibn-Mas'ud said, "Knowledge is not the prolific retention of traditions but a light which floods the heart."[1] Others, having in mind the words of God, "Such only of His servants as are possessed of knowledge fear God."[2] hold that knowledge is the fear of God. This verse evidently alludes to the choicest fruit of knowledge; and for that reason one of the scholars said that the meaning of the words, "We sought knowledge for other purposes than the glory of God but failed to grasp it and it remained the attribute of God alone," is that knowledge has resisted our efforts to grasp it and consequently its truth was not revealed to us; all we acquired was its words and terms.

1. *Cf. Hayat al-Awliya'*, Vol. I, p 131
2. *Surah* XXXV: 25.

Should you say that several well-learned men and jurisprudents, while characterised by blameworthy traits from which they never purified themselves, have excelled in the principles of law and applied jurisprudence and have been considered authorities thereon, my answer would be that if you had known the relative ranks of the sciences as well as the value of the science of the hereafter, you would have realized that the sciences to which they have addressed themselves are of little avail as knowledge but are of use merely as works provided they are sought as means with which to draw near to God. This last point has already been mentioned and will again be discussed.

The second duty of the student is to reduce to a minimum his ties with the affairs of the world and leave his kin and country because such ties occupy one's time and divert one's attention. Furthermore God has not given man two hearts and the more the mind divides its attention among several things the less able it is to comprehend the truth. For this reason it has been said, "Knowledge will surrender nothing to man unless man surrenders his all to it." Even when you devote yourself completely to it, you cannot be sure that you will attain any of it. This mind which divides its attention among different things is like a stream the water of which flows in several directions only to be absorbed in part by the earth and in part by the air with the result that nothing is left for irrigation of planted lands.

The third duty of the student is that he should neither scorn knowledge nor exalt himself over the teacher, but rather entrust to him the conduct of his affairs and submit to his advice just as the simple patient would submit to a sympathetic and clever physician. He should humble himself before his teacher and through his service seek reward and honour. It was related by al-Sha'bi[1] that once upon a time as Zayd ibn-Thabit[2] was leaving a funeral service at which he had just officiated, his mule was brought to him and as he was about

1. Abu-'Amr 'Amir ibn-Sharahil (between A.H. 103 and 105 A.D. 721 and 724). See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 436-8.
2. The scribe of the Prophet (ca. A.H. 54/A.D. 674). See *Tahdhib al-Asma'*, pp. 259-60.

to mount it ibn-'Abbas rushed and held the stirrup for him. Thereupon Zayd said, "Oh! No! Bother not thyself O cousin of the Apostle of God." Ibn-'Abbas replied, "Thus have we been charged to treat the learned and the illustrious." To which Zayd, bending over and kissing ibn-'Abbas' hand, replied, "Thus have we been charged to venerate the household of our Prophet." The Prophet also said, "It is not the habit of the believer to flatter anyone except when he is seeking knowledge." Therefore the seeker after knowledge should not lord it over his teacher. One manifestation of such a pride is the pupil's reluctance to heed the advice of anyone except the popular and well-known teachers. This is foolishness itself because knowledge is the way to salvation and happiness. Besides anyone who is seeking an escape from the claws of a threatening wild lion does not mind, as long as he is saved, whether he is led to safety by a well-known celebrity or by an obscure person. The tortures which the flames of hell fire inflict upon those who are ignorant of God are greater than any which the lions of the jungle are capable of inflicting. Wisdom, therefore, is the aim of every believer; he siezes it wherever he finds it, and is under obligation to anyone who imparts it to him, no matter who the person may be. For this reason it has been said:

"Knowledge humbleth the haughty youth,
As the flood washeth away the hill."

Thus knowledge is not attained except through humility and harkening. God said, "Lo! Herein is warning for him who hath a heart or harkeneth with his ear while he himself is an eye-witness." By "him who hath a heart" is meant the person who is prepared and capable of understanding knowledge but would fail to do so unless he would open his ears and heart and would attentively, humbly, thankfully, gladly, and gratefully receive whatever he is told. Let, therefore, the pupil be to his teacher like the soft soil which has received heavy rains and completely absorbed them. Whatever the teacher should recommend to the pupil the latter should follow, putting aside his own opinion since his teacher's faults are more

1. *Surah* L: 36.

useful to him than his own right judgment because experience would reveal details which might be strange but are nevertheless very useful. Often a physician may treat a patient suffering from fever with warm applications and drinks in order to increase his resistance to withstand the shock which results from the administration of the medicine. Because of his ignorance[1] the uninformed would be amazed by this treatment. God pointed out the possibility of such a thing through the story of al-Khidr[2] and Moses where al-Khidr, addressing Moses, said, "Verily thou canst not have patience with me, how canst thou be patient in matters the meaning of which thou comprehendest not?" He then allowed Moses to follow him on condition that the latter would maintain silence and ask no questions, and said, "If you follow me, ask me not of aught until I have given thee an account thereof". Nevertheless Moses did not wait and persisted to query al-Khidr with the result that they had to part company. In short, be sure that every pupil, who would hold fast to his own opinion and choice in defiance to those of his teacher, is doomed to disappointment and failure.

Should you also come forth with the assertion that, whereas God said, "Ask ye the people who are warned by Scriptures if ye know not,"[4] asking questions was ordained by God, you should remember that this is only so in whatever the teacher allows. On the other hand to ask about things which you are not yet competent to understand is blameworthy, and it was for this reason that al-Khidr had forbidden Moses to ask any questions. In other words do not ask questions out of the proper time and season; the teacher is better informed than you are as to things you are capable of understanding and as to the appropriate time for making them known. Similarly

1. Also al-Khidr, see *Surah* XVIII: 59-81; al-Tha alibi, *Qisas al-Anbiya'* (Cairo, 1297), pp. 207-220; al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf; al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsiar al-Qur'an*. See also A.J. Wensnick, art. "Al-Khidr" in Encyclopaedia of Islam.
2. *Surah* XVIII: 67-7.
3. *Ibid.*, 69.
4. *Surah* XVI: 45; XXI. 7.

unless, in anyone of the successive planes, the appropriate time of revelation is come, the time for its expectation does not arrive.[1]

'Ali said, "Among the obligations which you owe the learned man are: not to pester him with too many questions nor expect him to reply to all your inquiries; not to be importunate when he seems lazy nor attempt to detain him when he starts to go away; and finally not to divulge his secrets nor to tell tales about other people in his presence. Furthermore do not seek to trap him; whenever he commits a mistake be ready to excuse him. In obedience to God it is your duty to respect and honour him as long as he himself continues to obey God. Remain standing in his presence and whenever he needs something be the first to wait on him."

The fourth duty is that the student should at first pay no attention to the numerous differences of opinion which exist among people, whether in the secular sciences or in the sciences of the hereafter, because they would confuse and perplex his mind, cool his enthusiasm and cause him to despair of ever comprehending or learning anything. Rather he should first master the one and only praiseworthy way which is satisfactory to his teacher and then attend to the other schools of thought and questionable ideas. He should be on the look out to see if his teacher is not capable of reaching independent opinions but is in the habit of repeating the opinions of the different schools and the comments which have been made concerning them, because the influence of such a teacher is more misleading than it is helpful. One blind is not fit to lead the blind and guide them.[2] Anyone of his description is still in the darkness of perplexity and the wilderness of ignorance. Furthermore isolating the novice against questionable ideas is like segregating the newly converted Muslim from the unbelievers; while selecting the

1. Mystics hold God reveals Himself in five planes: (1) the plane of the Essence, (2) the plane of the Attributes, (3) the plane of the Actions, (4) the plane of Similitudes and Phantasy, and (5) the plane of sense and ocular vision. Each of these is a copy of the one above it, so that whatever appears in the sensible world is the symbol of an unseen reality.
2. *Cf.* Luke VI: 39; Mett. XV: 1,4.

experienced to dabble with and examine the different conflicting opinions is like urging the man whose faith is firmly established to mix with the unbelievers. For the same reason the faint-hearted are not allowed to attack the lines of the unbelievers but the task is delegated to the brave. Forgetting this subtle difference, some of the feeble-minded have thought that it was permissible to emulate the strong-minded in some of the lenient attitudes which they have taken towards certain questions, failing thereby to realize that the responsibilities of the strong differ from those of the weak. In this connexion someone said, "Whoever should see me at the beginning of my journey would become righteous (*siddiq*), but whoever should see me at the end would become unrighteous (*zindiq*), because at the end the acts of worship would be performed inwardly, and the senses would be rendered passive except in the fulfilment of the ordained duties. Then it would seem to the observers that the travellers were indolent, lazy, and negligent." But how far from the truth this is because the end is the state wherein the heart basks in the light of Presence, seeing Him face to face, and invoking His name constanally which is forever the best form of worship. For the feeble-minded to imitate the strong-minded in things which are clearly wrong is like his throwing a little refuse into a pitcher of water and justifying himself by pointing out several times more dirt is being continually dumped into the sea which is greater than the pitcher.[1] He then says that what is permissible in the case of the sea is still the more permissible in that of the pitcher.[2] But the poor fellow does not realize that, because of its enormity, the sea decomposes all refuse into water and consequently every uncleanliness, through the prevalence of the waters, is made, like the sea, clean. But a little refuse in the pitcher prevails over its contents of water and makes it, like itself, unclean. For a similar reason the Prophet was allowed what was forbidden to others. He was thus permitted to have nine wives, because he had enough vitality to enable him to deal justly with them despite their number. Others besides him would not be able to be even partially just with their wives, with the result that jealousy would develop among them and

1. John IV: 23-3.
2. *Cf. al-Bukhari*, Nikah, 4.

finally would drive the men, in their efforts to please, to trespass against God. He who would compare angels with blacksmiths would not succeed.

The fifth duty is that the seeker after knowledge should not allow any branch or kind of praiseworthy knowledge to escape him without carefully examining it in order to become familiar with its aims and purposes, and should time permit, he should take it up in detail; otherwise he should address himself to and master the most important, while acquainting himself with the rest, because the different branches of knowledge are both supplementary to one another and closely inter-related. Besides one of the immediate benefits of such acquaintance is that the student will no longer persist in his hostility to branches of knowledge other than his own — a hostility born of ignorance because, ordinarily, men are the enemies of the thing they do not know. Said God, "And not having submitted to guidance, they proceed to say, 'It is an age-long lie'."[1] The poet said:

"Fresh water in the mouth of the sick seems bitter."[2]

Knowledge, whether lower or higher, either leads men to God or helps them a little on their way. In this respect it is classified in relation to its ability to draw them nearer to their goal, [namely God], or how far it can send them away from that goal. Those who take up these branches of knowledge are like the guards who patrol the frontiers and outposts — each has his own rank, and according to that rank he has a reward in the hereafter, provided he had thereby sought the face of God.

The sixth duty is that the student should not address himself at the same time to every branch of knowledge, but should rather observe some kind of order and begin with the most important, especially since life is ordinarily too short to enable a person to pursue all the branches of knowledge. It is therefore wise to acquire

1. *Surah* XLVI: 10.
2. This verse is by al-Mutanabbi; see his *Diwan*, ed, S. I. Sadir (Beirut, 1900), p. 116, 1, 11.

the best of everything, satisfying oneself, so to speak, with the mere tasting of it while directing whatever power one has left, after having obtained all available knowledge, towards mastering that noblest of all sciences, the science of the hereafter including the science of practical religion, as well as the science of revelation. The goal of the science of practical religion is revelation and the goal of revelation is to know God. By this I do not mean the creed which the common folk receive from their parents or accept on the authority of others, nor the rules of dialectics and argumentation in defence of one's position against the devious attacks of adversaries which is the aim of the theologians. What I mean is a form of conviction, which is the result of a light with which God floods the heart of a servant who, through self-mortification, has purified his soul from all impurities until he has attained to the measures of abu-Bakr's faith which, as the Lord of creation testified, would outweigh the faith of all the world if it were ever compared with it.

I do not believe that the layman's belief, systematized by the theologian whose profession — because he excelled the layman in the art of stringing words together — was called the science of words (*kalam*), was beyond the ability of 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali, and the rest of Companions. But abu-Bakr excelled them all by virtue of the secret which rested in his bosom. It is, moreover, strange that a person, who had heard such sayings from the Prophet, should despise and dismiss similar sayings claiming that they were Sufi drivel and consequently unreasonable. You should, therefore, be careful, otherwise you would lose your capital. Work hard to possess that secret which is not found in the paraphernalia of the jurisprudents and theologians, and which you cannot attain except through your diligent search.

In short the noblest and the highest of all sciences is to know God. This science is like a sea the depth of which cannot be determined. In this science the highest rank is that of the prophets, then that of the saints and finally those that follow. It has been related that the portraits of two of the ancient wise men were seen on the wall of a certain mosque. In the one portrait one of the two wise men holds

in the hand a scroll on which is written, "When you have done everything well, think not that you have fulfilled all until you have come to know God and to know that He is the Cause of all causes and the Creator of all things." In the other portrait the second wise man also holds a scroll on which is written, "Before I had known God I was wont to drink and thirst again; but when I have known Him my thirst was quenched without any drinking."[1]

The seventh[2] duty is that no one should address himself to one branch of knowledge before he has already mastered the branch which precedes it because science is of necessity so arranged that one branch prepares for another and one branch leads to another. Only the person who would observe this order would succeed. God said, "Those to whom We have given the Book, they read it as it ought to be read."[3] In other words they do not leave a single branch of knowledge until they have mastered it in theory and in practice. Furthermore, in every branch of knowledge which the student may pursue, his aim should be the one above. Nor should he ever declare a certain science useless because its protagonists disagree among themselves, or because of the error of one or more among them, or because with their actions they violate the ordinances of their own science. Thus you find some who have relinquished the philosophical and theological sciences excusing themselves on the grounds that if these sciences had any truth in them they would have been comprehended by their protagonists. (These fallacies have been exposed in the *Mi'yar al-Ilm*).[4] Others believe that the medical science is false because of an error they have seen committed by a physician. Another group believes in the authenticity of astrology because a single prediction involving a certain person turned out right while others disbelieve it because in another case the prediction was faulty. All are wrong, however. Each case should be determined separately, as not every branch of knowledge can be independently mastered by every person. For this reason 'Ali said, "Accept no truth

1. *Cf.* John IV: 7-14.
2. The seventh duty is found only in C and the margin of SM while lacking in B and the text of SM.
3. *Surah* II: 115.
4. By the author, printed in Cairo, A.H. 1329.

because of the men who hold it but first find the truth and thou shalt know who are its real protagonists."

The eighth duty is to know how to ascertain the noble nature of this or the other science. By this is meant two things; the nobility of its fruit and the authenticity of its principles. Take for example the science of religion and medicine. The fruit of the one is eternal life and the fruit of the other is the physical life; consequently the science of religion is the nobler; or again the science of arithmetic and astrology: the former is the nobler because of the firmer and more authentic foundations of its principles. If on the other hand arithmetic should be compared with medicine the latter would be the nobler with respect to its fruit while with respect to its principles arithmetic would be the nobler. The fruit, however, has the priority. For this reason medicine, although mostly guess work, is nobler. Similarly it becomes evident that the noblest of all sciences is the science of knowing God, His angels, Books and apostles as well as that of knowing the path which leads to these sciences. Seek, therefore, nothing else and treasure nothing besides.

The ninth duty is that the student's purpose should, at the time, be the adornment and beautification of his inner self with virtue, and at the end, nearness of God and ascent to the neighbourhood of the heavenly hosts, the angels and the cherubim. His aim should not be the attainment of authority or influence nor contention with foolish men and boasting before his peers. But if his aim was to draw near to God he would inevitably seek that which was closest to it, namely the science of the hereafter. Nevertheless he should not look with contempt upon the other sciences such as the sciences of jurisprudence, the sciences of syntax and grammar which are connected with the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, and other sciences like those already mentioned in connexion with the auxiliary and supplementary sciences[1] discussed under those sciences the acquisition of which is *fard kifayah*.

You should not, however gather from our enthusiastic praise

1. See *supra*, p. 39.

of the science of the hereafter that we seek to disparage the other sciences. On the contrary those who have undertaken to study them are like those who have undertaken to guard the outpost of Islam where they are encamped, or like the conquerors who are warring on behalf of God. Of them some are active fighters, others are on the reserve, others are in charge of the water supply, while others look after the mounts; but all will receive their reward if their aim is the glory of the word of God rather than the possession of spoils. God said, "God will raise those of you who believe, and those to whom knowledge has been given, to loftier ranks."[1] And again referring to those who have followed His good pleasure, "there are (varying) grades with God."[2] Virtue is relative and our scorn for the money changers when we compare them with royalty does not mean that they are contemptible when compared with the street cleaners. Do not think, therefore, that whatever falls short of the highest rank is worthless. For the highest rank belongs to the prophets, followed by that of the saints, then that of the learned men who ar well versed in knowledge, and finally the righteous according to their ranks. In short "whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of good shall behold it; and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of evil shall behold it."[3] Whosoever will seek God through knowledge, no matter what kind, he is sure to profit and advance.

The tenth duty of the student is that he should know the relation of the different sciences to the goal so that he might not attach more importance to closeby, inconsequential matters than to remote but important things. The word important signifies anything which is of import to you; and nothing is of any import save your fate in this world and the next. But since, as said in the Qur'an and attested by insight and experience, it is not possible to enjoy both the pleasures of this world and the bliss of the next, it is more important to concern oneself with those things which will endure forever. Then will this world become a temporary abode, the body a vehicle, and works the power which will 'propel' it to the goal. Furthermore, there is no goal

1. *Surah* LVIII: 12.
2. *Surah* III: 157.
3. *Surah* XCIX: 7-8.

except meeting God; and, despite the fact that very few in this world do realize its significance, in its achievement lies all bliss.

As related to the happiness attending meeting God seeing His glorious face, which the prophets understood and sought but both laymen and theologians have failed to grasp, the sciences are of three grades. These grades can be understood by comparison with the following illustration. The slave whose freedom as well as the right to hold property are dependent upon performing the pilgrimage has been told that if he would perform the pilgrimage he would receive both his freedom and the right to hold property; but if he had made his preparations and actually set out, then for some unavoidable reason was detained on the way, he would receive his freedom only, thereby escaping the wretchedness of slavery, but would fail to enjoy the right to hold property. To accomplish all that he has to do three things: First, the preparation of the means of travel of buying a she-camel and a water-skin, and by packing the provisions and fitting out the mount. Second, setting out on the journey to the K'abah and leaving behind home and kin. Third the fulfilment of the ceremonials of the pilgrimage one after the other. Then after he had fulfilled all obligations and discarded the habit of pilgrimage (*hay'at al-ihram*), having already performed the farewell circumambulation (*tawaf al-wida'*) of the K'abah, he would qualify for freedom and the right to hold property. To every stage in the journey there is a corresponding rank: one for the preparation for the journey, another for setting out on the journey and crossing deserts, and third for performing the duties of the pilgrimage. Thus he who has already begun to carry out the duties of the pilgrimage is closer to happiness than either he who is still occupied in packing the provisions and fitting out the mount or he who has just embarked on the journey.

Similarly the science are of three kinds: One corresponds to the packing of the provisions, the fitting out of the mount, and the purchase the she-camel; it is science of medicine and jurisprudence and whatever pertains to the physical welfare of the body. Another corresponds to travelling in the desert and surmounting obstacles; it is the purification of the inner being from impure qualities as well as

surmounting those enormous obstacles against which both the ancients and the moderns have failed, and over which only those favoured by God have prevailed. This is following the way the acquisition of the knowledge of which is like the acquisition of the knowledge of the directions of the different desert routes and the encampments along the way. And just as the knowledge of the location of these encampments and acquaintance with the desert routes is useless without actually crossing them, so is the science of ethics useless without practice. Yet practice without knowledge is not possible. A third corresponds to the pilgrimage and its duties; it is the science of knowing God, His attributes, angels, and works as well as that we have mentioned in the survey of the science of revelation. In it is salvation and attainment of happiness. Salvation will be the lot of any follower of the path provided his aim be the true goal which is safety. The attainment of happiness, however, is not achieved except by the gnostics who know God and are close to Him, who are given to enjoy in His neighbourhood happiness, bounty and a garden of bliss. But to those who fall short of the full measure of perfection, only salvation and peace are given. This is in accordance to the words of God when He said, "But as to him who shall enjoy near access to God, his shall be happiness, bounty and a garden of bliss. But as to him who shall be of those of the right hand, his shall be (the greeting) — 'Peace to thee' — from those of the right hand."[1]

Anyone who does not proceed on the path which leads to God nor set out on (the journey), or anyone who does set out, not because of obedience or devotion, but for expedience, belongs to those of the left who have gone astray, and his shall be, "an abode of scalding water and brolling of hell-fire."[2]

You should know, therefore, that this according to the learned, men who were well-versed in the science of religion, is the "certain truth"[3] a truth which they have perceived inwardly through contemplation (*mushahadah*). This contemplation is more real and clearer than seeing with the eye. In it they rose above the stage of

1. *Surah* LVI; 87-90.
2. Ibid: 93-94.
3. Ibid: 95.

accepting truth on authority. They are like those who having heard, believed, then having seen for themselves were confirmed in their belief. The others are like those who accept truth and belief without enjoying either contemplation or the opportunity of seeing with their own eyes. Happiness lies beyond the science of revelation which in turn comes after the science of practical religion, the last being the following of the path of the hereafter. Overcoming the frailties of human nature as well as doing away with its blameworthy elements is possible only after mastering the science of human nature. The science of therapeutics and its administration depend upon the science of hygiene. The promotion of the conditions of health and hygiene by united action, mutual help and co-operation through which clothing, as well as the means of livelihood and lodging are secured, is entrusted to the magistrates, while the principles in accordance with which it is carried out for conducting human affairs in the spirit of justice and good government are in the domain of the jurisprudent. On the other hand the condition of health pertains to the physician. Thus anyone who says that science is divided into two parts — the science of the bodies (i.e. medicine) and the science of religion and means by the latter jurisprudence, has in mind the common exoteric sciences rather than the specialized esoteric studies.

Should you ask why have I likened medicine and jurisprudence to the packing of the provisions and the fitting out of the mount, then know that that which seeks to press towards God in order to attain a place in His neighbourhood is the heart and not the body. And by the heart I do not mean the palpable matter of flesh but one of the mysteries (sing. *sirr*) of God which the bodily senses fail to perceive; a spiritual substance (*latifah*) from God, sometimes indicated by the word spirit (*ruh*) and at times by the calm soul (*al-nafs al-mutma'innah*). In law it is referred to as the heart (*al-qalb*) because it is the primary vehicle for that mystery (*sirr*), and through it the whole body becomes a vehicle and an instrument for that spiritual substance (*latifah*). To remove the veil from that belongs to the science of revelation, a science withheld from men, and its discussion is proscribed. The limit to which it is permissible to go in its discussion is to say that it is a precious jewel and a pearl of

inestimable worth, more excellent than all material objects. It is a divine commandment as God Himself explained when He said, "And they will ask thee of the Spirit. Say: The Spirit (proceedeth) from the command of my Lord."[1] All created things stand in relation to God but the relation (of the heart) is of nobler character than that of any of the other organs. To God belong both "the creation and the command,"[2] but the latter is the greater. This is the precious jewel which contains the trust of God and which antedates the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains, since when it was offered to them they refused its burden and feared to receive it[3] because of the world of dominion (*'alam al-amr*) i.e., the attributes of God. This should not be taken to mean that the (spirits) are eternal, as he who holds that the spirits are eternal is a blind fool who does not know what he says. Because this is beyond the scope of our subject let us desist from its discussion. What is intended here is to show that this spiritual substance (*latifah*) is the driving force which presses toward God, because it has proceeded from the command of the Lord. It came from God and to God it returns.

As to the body it is only the vehicle which that spiritual substance occupied and through which it accomplishes its work. The body serves the same purpose for it on the path of God as the she-camel does for a man on the pilgrim route; or like the water-skin in which is stored the water which the body needs. Thus every science the aim of which is the welfare of the body is a contributor to the welfare of the vehicle of the spiritual substance. It is evident that medicine is one of these sciences because it is necessary for the preservation of health. Even if the individual were living by himself he would be in need of the science of medicine. Jurisprudence, however, differs from medicine in that it may be dispensed with by the individual if he were living by himself. But man has been created in a way which makes it impossible for him to live all alone since he is unable to secure his food and livelihood through tilling, farming, bread-making, and cooking as well as manufacturing clothes, building

1. *Surah* XVII: 87. 2. *Surah* VII: 52.
3. *Cf. Surah*: XXXIII: 72.

houses or constructing tools for all these activities. Man was, therefore, compelled to lead an agrarian life of co-operation. But no matter how much people mix with one another their ambitions are aroused and consequently they compete for the satisfaction of their desires, and contend and struggle for their fulfilment. From their struggle would result their destruction because of the external disharmony in the body politic just as it would result from internal disturbances in their physical bodies whenever the harmony between the humours is lacking. Through medicine the harmony between the opposing humours within the body is maintained and through politics and justice the harmony between the contending elements in the body politic is preserved. The science of how to maintain harmony between the humours is medicine, and the science of how to preserve harmony among men in their affairs and transactions is jurisprudence. Both of these, whether medicine or jurisprudence, are for the preservation of the body which is the vehicle of the spirit. The person who devotes himself to the study of either medicine or jurisprudence, unless he mortifies his body and reforms his heart, is like the person who purchases the she-camel and its feed as well as the water-skin (in preparation for the pilgrimage) but never does set out. And he who spends his life over the niceties of words which occur in the course of the debates of jurisprudence is like him who spends his life tracing the minute fibres of the strings with which the water-skin that the pilgrim carries is sewn together. The relation of the former, of the followers of the path of reforming the heart which leads to the science of revelation is like the relation of the latter to those who go forward along the pilgrimage route or those who perform its duties.

Think therefore of these things and then accept this free advice from one who has accomplished these things but only achieved them after a great struggle and a brave effort to break away from the established tradition of men, the common folk and the elite, which tradition is based on ambition and lust.

The duties of the teacher

Man occupies four states in relation to knowledge similar to

the four states he occupies in relation to money. One state is that of the acquisitiveness of the financial lord, in which case he would be seeking; another is that of possession which would eliminate the necessity of asking for help; another is that of spending his money on himself, in which case he would be indulging in the luxuries it affords; and finally there is the state of spending his money on others, in which case he would be a generous philanthropist. This last state is the noblest.

So also is it with regard to knowledge. First, there is the state of seeking knowledge in which man is acquisitive: another is that of having knowledge in which state he would not need to inquire of others; a third state is that of reflection wherein he would contemplate and enjoy his achievement; and last, there is the state of teaching wherein he imparts his knowledge to others. This last state is the noblest.

"Thus he who has knowledge and shall do and teach the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."[1] — In this state the teacher is like the sun, which being itself luminous, sheds light; or like the musk which being itself fragrant, makes other objects fragrant. On the other hand he who possesses knowledge but does not practise it is like a notebook, which itself being unintelligent, nevertheless serves as a medium of transmission of the knowledge that its pages contain; or like the whetstone, which, itself being blunt, sharpens the razor; or like the needle, which while it remains naked, serves in making clothing for others; or like the wick of a lamp which burns itself out in giving light for others. A poet said:

"A glowing wick is he
Who gives his light and dies."

Whoever takes up teaching for a profession takes upon himself a great mission and a grave responsibility. He should, therefore, observe its proprieties and fulfil its duties. The following are these duties.

1. See *supra*, p. 21

The first duty of the teacher is to be sympathetic to students and treat them as his own children. The Prophet said, "I am to you like a father who desires to save his child from the fires of hell, which is more important than any of the efforts of parents to save their children from the fires of the earth."[1] For this reason the rights of the teacher have become greater than the rights of the parents. The parents are the cause of the children's present existence in this mortal life, while the teacher is the cause of their immortal life. Without him that which has been brought into existence through the parents would be doomed to eternal destruction. Only the teacher is of service for the eternal life in the next world. By teacher I mean the teacher of the sciences of the hereafter or the science of this world, whose goal, in all his work, is bliss in the hereafter and not success in this world. Teaching with a view to achieving success in this world is destruction for both the teacher and the student. From such destruction we seek refuge with God.

Just as it is the duty of the children of one father to love one another and co-operate in achieving all their common goals so it is also the duty of the students of one teacher to love and cherish one another. This is not possible unless the hereafter is their goal; but if this world is their aim, jealousy and hatred will plague them.

The learned men and the children of the hereafter are travellers journeying to God, and starting from this world they follow the path to Him. The years and the months are only stations on the path. If friendship and love are fostered by companionship along the road among travellers journeying to different countries, how much more should they be fostered by companionship along the path to Paradise!

Since there will be no scarcity of happiness in the hereafter, there will be no struggle among its children; but whereas there is no abundance of pleasures in this world, men persist in struggle and competition. Those who seek to attain position of authority through knowledge exclude themselves from the company of those whom God meant when He said, "Verily the believers are brethren,"[2] and

1. *Cf.* ibn-Hanbal, Taharah, 121; *abu-Dawud*, Taharah, 4.
2. *Surah* XLIX: 10.

include themselves among those of whom God said, "Friends on that day shall become foes to one another, except the God-fearing."[1]

The second duty of the teacher is to follow the example of the Law-giver: he should seek no remuneration for his services on behalf of knowledge and accept neither reward nor thanks. Rather he should impart his knowledge free for the glory of God and for the sake of drawing near to Him. He should not feel that his students are under any obligation to Him although the feeling of obligation is incumbent upon them. He should give them credit for disciplining their hearts with knowledge in order to draw near to God. Thus, when someone lends you a lot of land so that you can exploit it for yourself by planting it. The benefits you reap are greater than those of the owner of the land. Would you then feel that he was under any obligation to you? Similarly, in teaching, your compensation is greater than that of the student, and without him you would not have attained it. Therefore, look for no reward except from God Who said in His Book, "Oh my people, I ask you not for riches: my reward is of God alone."[2] Riches as well as everything in the world are servants of the body while the body is the vehicle of the soul which, in turn, is in the service of knowledge with which it is honoured. Therefore anyone who would seek riches through knowledge is like the person who, in order to clean the soles of his shoes, would wipe them against his face, reducing thereby the master into a servant, and making of the slave, a lord. This is what is meant by falling headlong and is exactly like the fate of the criminals on the day of judgment when they "shall droop their heads before their Lord."[3] In short, to the teacher belong the honour and the credit. Nevertheless see how the affairs of religion have fallen into the hands of men who claim that their sole aim, in pursuing the sciences of jurisprudence and theology and in teaching these two and other sciences besides, is to draw near unto God, yet they sacrifice their riches and rank, and suffer great humiliations in the service of rulers in order to gain their favours. Were these men

1. *Surah* XLIII: 67
2. *Surah* XI: 31; B and text of SM have *Surah* XLII: 22 instead.
3. *Cf Surah* XXXII: 12.

to turn away from such practices they would be ignored and no one would turn to them for advice.

Furthermore the teacher often expects the student to follow him in everything, and to back his supporters, fight his adversaries, rise publicly to perform his demands, and to wait upon him in all his needs. If the student fails to fulfil all these expectations the teacher will turn against him and become one of his most virulent enemies. How despicable is the learned man who is not only content with such a position but is also proud of it, and is not ashamed to say that his aim in taking up teaching is to spread knowledge for the sake of drawing near unto God and for defending His religion! But you have only to look at the record in order to see the hypocrisy and the deception of it all.

The third duty of the teacher is that he should not withhold from the student any advice, or allow him to attempt the work of any grade unless he is qualified for it, or permit him to address himself to abstruse sciences before he has mastered those which are clear. He should also point out to him that the purpose of acquiring knowledge is to draw near unto God rather than power, boasting, and competition, and should, in the strongest possible way, condemn any such things in his students.

The harm which the unrighteous learned man does is greater than the good. If the teacher notices that the student is seeking knowledge only for the sake of worldly advantages, he should examine what sciences the student is pursuing. If he finds that these sciences are those of disputation in jurisprudence, argument in theology, and handing down opinions in controversies and legal disputes, then he should dissuade him from them because they do not belong either to the sciences of the hereafter or to those which have already been described as sciences which we learn for a purpose other than the service of God but turn out to be for that same purpose, the most useful. These include the sciences of interpretation and tradition as well as those branches of knowledge to which the ancients

addressed themselves in connexion with the science of the hereafter and the science of the characteristics of the soul together with the manner of their reform. If the student had learnt these things with the intention of seeking the world with his learning he had better be let alone because, although he had addressed himself to them in the hope of becoming a preacher and gaining a following, he would, in the course of his work, wake up to the fact that in them lie those sciences which are conducive to the fear of God and which belittle the world and glorify the hereafter. This may finally lead the student to the right path and he would then observe what he preaches to others. The desire to be popular and influential are to man like the grains which are scattered around the trap in order to snare catch the birds. The same thing has been done by God in connexion with man: He created sexual desire in order to ensure procreation and the survival of the race. He also created ambition as a means for perpetuating knowledge, a thing highly desirable in these sciences. But to devote one's life to sheer controversies, theological argumentations, and unusual details while ignoring other studies promotes, in all except those to whom God has shown mercy or those who have taken up other religious sciences as well, nothing but hardening in the heart, negligence toward God, excess in iniquity, and inordinance in striving for power. There is no better proof for this than personal experience and observation. Therefore look, learn, and think so that you might witness the realization of this fact by men all over the world. Truly God is the source of our help.

It has been related that Sufyan al-Thawri was once seen in a sad mood and was, therefore, asked, 'Why are you sad? To which he replied." We have become a traffic for the children of this world. One after another would attach himself to us until he had acquired a measure of learning; whereupon he would be appointed a judge, or a governor, or a mayor of the place (*qahraman*)."

The fourth duty which is one of the finer points of the profession of teaching is that the teacher, in dissuading the student from his evil ways, should do so by suggestion rather than openly,

and with sympathy rather than with odious upbraiding. Open dissuasion destroys the veil of awe, invites defiance, and encourages stubbornness. The Prophet, who is the guide of every teacher, said in this connexion, "If men had been forbidden to make porridge of camels' dung, they would have done it, saying that they would not have been forbidden to do it unless there had been some good in it." The same principle is brought out in the story of Adam and Eve and the prohibition imposed upon them.[1] This story has not been related as a night entertainment but as an example and a reminder. Such allusions and suggestions invite men of noble souls and discerning minds to attempt to elicit their import, and the pleasure of grasping their meaning results in a greater desire on the part of man for learning in order to show that such things are not beyond the capacity of his intellect.

The fifth duty is that the person who is teaching a certain science should not belittle or disparage the value of other sciences before his students. Thus it is customary for the teacher of language to disparage jurisprudence and the teacher of jurisprudence to slight the sciences of tradition and interpretation saying that they are nothing but stories and narratives similar to those of old women and that there is no room in them for intellect or reason. The teacher of theology is in the habit of avoiding jurisprudence and saying that it is nothing but hair-splitting and disputations and menstruation and, therefore, should not be compared with theology — the study of the attributes of God.

Such traits are blameworthy and reprehensible in teachers, and should be avoided. In fact the teacher of one science should prepare the student for the study of other subjects, and whenever he is responsible for the teaching of more than one subject, he should observe the rules of gradual progress in promoting his students from one grade to another.

The sixty duty, of the teacher is that he should limit the student to what the latter is able to understand and should not require of him

1. *Cf. Surah*, II: 33; VII: 18-9; Gen. 2: 16-7.

anything which his mind cannot grasp for fear that he would develop a feeling of dislike for the subject, and his mind would become confused. In this the teacher should follow the example of the lord of men who said, "We prophets have been commanded to give every man his rightful place and to communicate with everyone according to his own ability to understand."[1] Therefore let the teacher impart the truth to his student if he is sure that the latter is able to understand it. The Prophet said, "No one ever relates a tradition to a people which is beyond their minds to understand without being the cause of perplexity to some of them."[2] 'Ali, pointing to his breast, said, "Herein lies much knowledge. Would that there were some to comprehend and transmit it?" He was right in his assertion because the hearts of the righteous are the vaults of divine mysteries. Therefore the learned man should not divulge all his knowledge to any one indiscriminately, especially when the student, who may be able to understand that knowledge, is not capable of making use of it, and still less when the student does not understand it.

Jesus said, 'Do not hang pearls around the neck of a swine.'[3] But wisdom is better than pearls and he who abhors it is worse than a swine. For this reason it has been said, "In order to be safe from his hand and useful to him deal with every person with the measure of his own intellect and mete out into him with the scale of his own mind. Otherwise, because of the disparity between the measure and the mind, your efforts will result in failure."

A certain learned man was once asked about something but he gave no answer. Then his questioner said to him, "Have you not heard that the Apostle of God said, 'Whoever will conceal any useful knowledge will, on the day of resurrection, be bridled with a bit of fire'." The learned man replied, "You may leave the bit here and go. Then if anyone who understands comes and I still conceal that useful knowledge from him, let God bridle me with that bit of fire." Did not God say, "Do not give to the fools your substance,"[4] as a warning

1. For first part of tradition *cf. Muslim*, Intro.; second part unidentified.
2. *Cf. Muslim*, Intro.
3. *Cf.* Matt. 7:6.
4. *Surah*, IV: 4.

that the safeguarding of knowledge from those who might corrupt it is more important than imparting it. Similarly to give to those who are not in need is not a lesser offence than withholding help from those who are in need.

> Shall pearls be giv'n to herders of the sheep,
> Shall wealth be trusted to their rustic keep?
> They would not comprehend nor know its worth,
> To give them would be adorning beasts.
> But God is kind if by His grace He sends
> One worthy of my knowledge, of my wit,
> To him my goods I'll give and gain his love;
> Until such time I will withhold my gifts —
> One's learning would be wasted upon fools;
> And he doth sin who from the worthy keeps.

The seventh duty is that the teacher should give his backward students only such things as are clear and suitable to their limited understanding and should not mention to them anything about the details that are apt to follow but which he deems fitting for the present to withhold. Such a course would discourage the students and make their interest even in easy subjects, lukewarm, perplex them in their minds and make them think that the real reason for the teacher's reluctance to impart to them those details is his illiberality, especially because everyone usually believes himself capable of mastering every science no matter how complex. Thus there is no one who is not satisfied with God for the perfect mind He gave him. Even the most foolish and most feeble minded among men is usually the most pleased with the perfection of his mind. For this reason any one of the common folk who is law-abiding and in whose heart the articles of faith, which have come down to him from his forbears, and unequivocally and unqualifiedly established, and his conduct is good but his mind is not capable of anything beyond that, such a person should not be confused in his belief. On the contrary he should be let alone because if he were confronted with the esoteric interpretations of externals he would relinquish his standing as a layman without attaining the status of an educated man. Then will the obstacles which

have hitherto deterred him from evil crumble and he will be transformed into a rebellious devil who will destroy both himself and others. In fact laymen should not be bothered with discussion on the realities which underlie complex sciences but rather should be confined to instruction in the acts of worship (*'ibadat*) and honesty in carrying out their respective professions. Their hearts should be filled with yearning for Paradise and fear of Hell-fire as the Qur'an has ordained. They should not be confused with questionable ideas for fear that such ideas strike root in their hearts with the result that it becomes difficult for them to free themselves from such errors and consequently fall victims to misery and destruction. In short the door of controversy and discussion should not be opened to the laymen because it will interfere with their professions on which the welfare of the world as well as the continued happiness of the elite depends.

The eighth duty is that the teacher do what he teaches and not allow his works to give the lie to his words, because knowledge is comprehended through the mind while works through the eyes. But those who see with their eyes are more than those who perceive with their minds and therefore when practice contradicts theory righteousness is frustrated. And again whenever a person partakes of something and warns others not to touch it because it is a deadly poison, he makes himself a laughing stock to men and lays himself open to their accusations and, what is still worse, he makes them more anxious to try what they have been forbidden to do, saying that had it not been the sweetest and the most delicious of all things, he would not have kept it exclusively for himself. The relation of the guide to those who seek his guidance is like the relation of the stamp to the clay and like that of the shadow of the cane to the cane itself. How then could the clay be stamped with a stamp that bears no character and how could the shadow of the cane be straight if the cane itself were crooked? The following verse conveys the same meaning:

> If thou condemn a sin and then commit
> The same transgression, shame upon thy head.

God also said, "Will ye enjoin what is right upon others, and

forget yourselves?"[1] For this reason the learned man's responsibility for his sins is greater than that of the ignorant especially because many will follow the learned man's example and will be misled through his faults. And whoever establishes an evil precedent shoulders responsibility for that precedent and for the sins of those who might follow its example. 'Ali said, "Two men have broken my back [with the weight of their sins]: a debauched learned man and an ascetical ignorant one. The former misleads men through his debauchery and the latter through his asceticism."

1. *Surah*, II: 41.

SECTION VI

On the Evils of Knowledge and on Determining the Distinguishing Features of the Learned Men of the Hereafter and those of the Teachers of Falsehood.

We have already enumerated the excellence of knowledge and of the learned man, while concerning the teachers of falsehood several important strictures have been mentioned. These strictures have shown that the teachers of falsehood are the most severely punished of all men on the day of resurrection. It is therefore very important to ascertain what distinguishes the learned men of this world from the learned men of the hereafter. By the learned men of this world we mean the teachers of falsehood whose sole purpose in pursuing knowledge is to enjoy the luxuries of this life and to achieve power and position among its people. The Prophet said, "The most severely punished of all men on the day of resurrection will be the learned man whom God has not blessed with His knowledge;"[1] and again, "No man will be learned unless he puts knowledge into practice."[2] The Prophet also said, "Knowledge is of two kinds: formal knowledge which does not go beyond verbal profession — it is the evidence of God against His people and according to it He would judge them, and genuine knowledge deep-rooted in the heart — this is the knowledge which is useful."[3] Muhammad also declared, "At the end of time there will be ignorant worshippers and corrupt learned men."[4] He also said, "Acquire not knowledge in order to vie with the learned, dispute with and silence the insolent, and win favour and popularity among men, for whosoever would do this would be doomed to Hell-fire,"[5] and again "Whoever would conceal his

1. See *supra*, p. 1.
2. *Cf. al-Darimi*, Intro., 29: 6.
3. Ibid., 34: 4.
4. *Cf. Hikyat al-Awliya'*, Vol. II, pp. 331-2.
5. *Cf. ibn-Majah*, Intro., 23: 4-5

knowledge, would be bridled by God with a bit of fire."[1] The Prophet also said, "Others make me more afraid for your safety than the anti-Christ (*al-dajjal*)." On being asked whom he meant, he replied, "The false teachers."[2] He also said, "Whoever would increase in knowledge but would not increase in righteousness would increase God's wrath upon him."[3] Jesus said, "How can you lead the night-travellers along the way when yourselves are perplexed."[4] These and other traditions show the gravity of the danger inherent in knowledge and reveal the fact that a learned man is faced with either eternal destruction or eternal happiness. They also show that man, by pursuing knowledge, is denied safety unless he attains happiness as well.

We find in history the same evidence. 'Umar said, "The thing I fear most for the safety of this nation is the learned hypocrite."[5] 'Umar was then asked how one could be both learned and hypocritical, to which he replied, "While his learning does not go beyond verbal knowledge, his heart remains untouched and his works betray no wisdom." Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "Be not one of those who combine the knowledge of learned men and the briliant ideas of the wise but conduct themselves the way of fools."

A certain man addressed abu-Hurayrah saying, "I want to acquire knowledge but I fear I shall lose it." Abu-Hurayrah replied, "To discard knowledge is just the same as losing it." Ibraham ibn-'Uyaynah[6] was once asked, "Who is the man whose remorse will be the greatest?" Ibn-'Uyaynah replied, "While life lasts it is the philanthropist who has extended his kindness to the ungrateful: but at death it will be the learned man who neglected to put his knowledge into practice" Al-Khalil ibn-Ahmad said "There are four kinds of men: One is the man who knows, and knows that he knows — he is a learned man, and therefore follow him. Another is the man who knows, but does not know that he knows — he is asleep, wake

1. *Cf. ibn-Majah*, Intro., 24: 1; abu-Dawud, 'Ilm, 9.
2. *Cf. al-Tayalisi*, No. 975.
3. *Cf. al-Darimi*, Intro., 34: 25.
4. Al-Ghazzali might have combined Luke vi: 39 and VII: 32 into one saying.
5. *Cf.* Tayalisi, No. 975.
6. **C and B**, 'Uyaynah; SM. 'Utbah. Unidentified.

him up. A third is the man who does not know, and knows that he does not know — he desires to learn, teach him. A fourth is the man who does not know, and does not know that he does not know — he is ignorant, reject him." Sufyan al-Thawri said, "Knowledge summons works and, unless they respond, it departs." Ibn-al-Mubarak said, "As long as a man continues to seek knowledge he remains learned; but the moment he thinks he has mastered all knowledge, he recedes into ignorance." Al-Fudayl ibn-'Iyad[1] said, Three men do I pity: a mighty man who has fallen, a rich man who has become poor and a learned man who has become lahghing stock for the world." Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "The penalty which the learned men receive for seeking the world through works which belong to the hereafter is the death of their hearts." In this connexion a certain poet has said:

> Strange to me is he who barters good for evil;
> Stranger still the one who trades his soul for pleasure;
> But he who pays so dear a price as this, to rob
> The earthly joys of others, he is strangest yet.

The Prophet, referring to the wicked learned man, said, "The learned man will suffer intense agonies of torture and, in order to increase his pain, will be made to go all around Hell, displaying himself to the people therein."[2] Usamah ibn-Zayd[3] related that he heard the Apostle of God say, "On the day of resurrection the learned man will be brought forward and thrown into the fires of Hell where, as a result, his bowels will gush out and he will be made to carry them round and round all over Hell in a manner similar to that of a donkey when it turns a mill-stone round and round. Then the people of Hell will ask him about the reasons of his torture and he will say, "I was wont to enjoin what is right upon others but failed to do it myself, and to forbid what is wrong and committed it myself."[4] The learned man will receive a twofold penalty for his sin because he trespassed

1. A.H. 187/ A.D. 802; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, pp. 157-9.
2. Unidentified. *Cf.* next tradition.
3. Ibn-Harithah (A.H. 54/A.D. 674); see ibn-Sa'd, Vol. IV, pt. 1, pp. 43-51; *Tadhib al-Asma'*, pp. 147-50.
4. *Al-Bukhari*, Bad' al-Khalq, 10.

wilfully. For this reason God said, "Verily the hypocrites shall be in the lowest abyess of Fire."[1] This, He said, because they have denied Him after they have known Him. God also deems the Jews more wicked than the Christians although the former, unlike the latter, have not given God a son nor said that He was one of three gods. The Jews, however, have denied God despite their knowledge of Him. God said, "They know him even as they know their own children."[2] And again, "Yet when that of which they had knowledge came to them they believed not in it. The execration of God be on the unbelievers."[3] In the course of the story of Bal'am ibn-Ba'ura,[4] God said, "Recite to them the story of him to whom We vouchsafed Our signs and followed them not, and Satan pursued him and he became one of the beguiled:.... he is, therefore, like unto the dog who lolls out his tongue, whether thou chase him away, or leave him alone."[5] Thus Bal'am was given the Book of God but gave himself instead to lust and was, therefore, likened to a dog. In other words whether or not he was given wisdom, he would go after lust.

Jesus said, "The teachers of falsehood are like unto a rock which has fallen into the source of the stream; it neither absorbs any water itself nor permits it to flow out and reach the plants; or like unto the pipes which lead into the cesspool: gypsum white on the outside while their interior is full of refuse and filth: or like unto sepulchres the exteriors of which are polished and clean but are within full of dead men's bones."[6] These traditions and historical narratives show that the learned man of this world will occupy a more inferior position and will receive a more severe punishment than the ignorant man, while those who will succeed in attaining a seat in the neighbourhood of God are the learned men of the hereafter.

Characteristic of the learned men of the hereafter are the

1. *Surah*, IV: 144.
2. See *Surahs*, II; 141; VI: 20.
3. *Sruah*, II: 83.
4. Balaam the son of Beor. *Cf.* Num, 22, 23, 24.
5. *Surah*, VII: 174-5.
6. *Cf.* Matt. 23: 4, 27.

following. They should not seek this world through their knowledge because the least of the learned men should know the insignificance of this life as well as its sordidness, foulness, and abrupt end in contrast to the greatness of the hereafter, its permanence, the purity of its happiness, and the majesty of its dominion. They should know that this world and the hereafter are diametrically opposed to each other, as hostile as fellow-wives — the more you please the one the more you displease the other; or as the two scales of a balance — the lower the one falls the higher the other rises; or as the east and the west — the more you advance towards the one the father away you go from the other; or as two glasses of water, the one is full while the other is empty — the more you pour out of the one into the other the less water is left in the first. Thus he who does not realize how insignificant and sordid is this world, how closely intermixed are its pains and pleasures, and how transient it is, is insane. Whether it be observation or experience, both testify to the same conclusion. How then could the person who has no brains be numbered among the learned men? Again, he who does not realize the greatness and the permanence of the hereafter, is an unbeliever lacking all faith. And how could the person who has no faith be learned? Anyone who does not realize that this world is diametrically opposed to the hereafter and that any attempt to reconcile the one with the other is an impossible undertaking, is a man ignorant of the laws of the prophets, and still worse he disbelieves the whole Qur'an. How then could he be numbered among the company of the learned? Furthermore anyone who knows all this, yet does not give the hereafter priority over this world must be a prisoner of Satan. His lust has vanquished him and his wickedness has triumphed over him. How then could such a person be considered learned?

Among the traditions of David is the following which he related having received it from God. Said God, "The least thing I would do with the learned man who would neglect My love in favour of his lust is to deny him the pleasure of communion (*munajah*) with Me." Addressing David again God said, "Ask not a learned man who hath been drunk with the love of this world, about Me lest he blocketh

the road of My love in thy face — such men are highway brigands who rob My people. O David! If thou findest one who seekest after Me, be thou unto him a servant. O David! Whoever leadeth a fleeing man back unto Me, the same I shall write down as a man of sound judgment; and whomsoever I write down as a man of sound judgment, him I shall never torment." For this reason al-Hasan al-Basri said, "The penalty which the learned men receive for seeking the world through works which belong to the hereafter is the death of their hearts." For the same reason Yahya ibn-Mu'adh said, "Knowledge and wisdom will lose their glory if through them the world is sought." Sa'id ibn-al-Musayyab said, "If you see a learned man frequenting the houses of rulers you may conclude that he is a thief" 'Umar said, "If you see the learned cherishing this world, then entrust not your religion into his hands because everyone is captivated by what he loves."

Malik ibn Dinar[1] said, "I have read in one of the books of the ancients that God said, 'The least thing I would do with the learned man who has given himself to the love of this world is to remove from his heart the pleasure of communion with Me'."[2]

A certain man wrote to a brother of his saying, "You have been given knowledge; envelop not, therefore, the light of your knowledge with the darkness of sin lest you be left behind in darkness when the learned go forward with the light of their knowledge. Yahya bn-Mu'adh al-Razi used to say to the learned men of this world, "Ye people of knowledge! Your palaces are Caesarian,[3] your homes are like those of Chosroes,[4] your doors are Tahirid,[5] your footwear is like

1. A.H. 131/A.D. 748-9; see *Hikyat al-Awliya'*, Vol. II, pp. 357-89; ibn-Khallikan. Vol. II, nn. 202-3.
2. See *supra*.
3. After Caesar (Ar. Qaysar), the generic name which the Arabs apply to the Byzantine emperors.
4. Ar. Kisra, the generic name which the Arabs apply to Persian monarchs.
5. Probably after Tahir ibn-al-Husayn dhu-al-Yaminayn (A.H. 207/A.D. 822) As vizir to al-Ma'mun and as founder of the Tahirid dynasty in Khurasan, his doors were inaccessible. *Cf.* al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, Vol. IX, p. 345. For his life see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 420-24; *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, Vol. IX, pp. 353-55.

that of Goliath,[1] your coaches are like those of Qarun,[2] your home utensils are Pharaonic, your sins are the same as those of the *Jahiliyah* days, and your beliefs are satanic; where then is the Muhammadan law?"

A poet said:

> The shepherd keeps the sheep from harm and hurt;
> Who then would keep them safe by day and night
> If they who watch were wolves instead of men?

Said another:

> Ye learned men of this city of favour,
> What will cure salt which looses its flavour?

One of the gnostics was one asked, "Do you not think that he to whom transgression is attractive does not know God?" To which the gnostic replied, "I do not doubt that he who prefers this world to the hereafter, does not know God." This latter thing is by far the worse. Furthermore you should not think that the giving up of wealth would qualify anyone to join the company of the learned men of the hereafter. Glory is more harmful than wealth. For this reason Bishr ibn-al-Harith[3] related that a certain *Bab*[4] once told him: "Whenever you hear a man say, 'We were told,' what he really means is, 'Harken unto me'." This same Bishr buried over ten[5] baskets full of books used to say, "I have an urge to relate traditions but not until this urge subsides will I relate." He also, as well as others besides him, said,

1. Quranic Jalut, *Surah* 11, 250.
2. One of the Quranic characters (*Surahs* XXVIII: 76-82, XXIX: 38, and LX: 25) Qarun has been identified with Korah of the Bible (Num, XVI). The Quranic legend is based upon the Talmudie tradition of Korah's great wealth, and appears to be also confused with that of Crocsus. See al-Th'alibi, *Qisas al-Anbiya'*, pp. 203-207: G.A. Barton. "Korah", in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*; D.B. MacDonald, "Karun", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
3. Known also as al-Hafi (A.H. 227/A.D. 842). See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 158-160; al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, Vol. VII, pp. 67-80:
4. Literally means "door"; a title given by dervishes to their great *shaykhs*.
5. *Cf. Tarikh Baghdad*, Vol. VIII, p. 71, 1, 14, where the number is eighteen.

"If you felt an urge to relate traditions, resist it and keep quite; but if you feel no urge, go ahead and relate." This is because the pleasure of the glory of imparting knowledge and of occupying the position of a guide is greater than all the joys of this world. Consequently whoever should give in to the urge of his lust for such glory, the same would be from the children of this world. Thus Sufyan al-Thawri said, "The temptation to recite a tradition is more insidious than that of family or wealth." How then is it possible for people not to fear its temptation?

The chief of the Apostles was told, "And had We not stablished thee, thou hadst well nigh learned to them a little."[1] Sad Sahl,[2] "All knowledge, except that which pertains to the hereafter, is of the earth earthly; and all work is in vain except it be sincere." He also said, "All men are dead except the learned; all learned men are in a state of stupefaction except those who practise their knowledge; all those who practise their knowledge are conceited except those who are sincere; and those who are sincere are constantly afraid until they know their fate."

Abu-Sulayman al-Darani[3] said, "If a man should pursue the study of tradition or get married, or travel in search of a living, the same has placed his faith in this world." (By the study of tradition al-Darani had in mind the study of singular chains of authorities of (the study of traditions which are of no use for the hereafter). Jesus said, "How could he who persists in the paths of this world while his destination is the hereafter, or he who seeks knowledge in order to show off and not for the sake of following its precepts, be counted among the learned?"[4]

Salih ibn-Kaysan al-Basri[5] said, "One day I came upon the

1. *Surah*, XVII: 76.
2. Abu-Muhammad Sahl ibn-'Abdullah ibn-Yunus al-Tustari (A.H. 283/ A.D. 896): see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 389.
3. A.H. 234/A.D. 849-50; see ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 494-95 Yaqut, *Buldan*, Vol. II, p. 536.
4. *Cf.* Luke 9: 62.
5. A.H. 144 A.D. 761; see ibn-Qutaybah, p. 245; *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol. I, p. 140.

teachers while they were praying God to save them from evil doers who are versed in the law." Abu-Hurayrah related that the Apostle of God once said, "Whoever would seek knowledge with which men draw near to God and would use it to attain some earthly desire would not on the day of resurrection find his way to Paradise."[1] God also described the teachers of falsehood as those who would expend their knowledge in order to devour this world and described the learned men of the hereafter as humble and ascetic. Thus He said concerning the teachers of falsehood, "Moreover, when God entered into a covenant with those to whom the Scriptures were given, (and said), 'Ye shall surely make it known to men and hide it not,' they cast it behind their backs, and sold it for a sorry price! Vile is that which they purchase."[2] And concerning the learned men of the hereafter God said, "Among the people of the Book are those who believe in God and in what hath been sent down to you and in what hath been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Him. They barter not His signs for a mean price. These! their recompense awaiteth them with their Lord."[3] One of the Fathers said, "On the last day the learned men will be judged with the prophets while the judges will be judged with the magistrates." By judges is meant every jurist who intends to seek the world through his knowledge.

Abu-al-Darda' related that he had heard the Prophet say, "God revealed to one of the prophets saying, 'Say unto those who study jurisprudence for a purpose other than religion and to those who acquire knowledge for a purpose other than that of doing according to it, say unto them that they appear before people in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are raving wolves. Their tongues are sweeter than honey but their hearts are more bitter than col cynth. They act deceitfully against Me and scorn Me. Verily I shall confront them with temptations which would confound even the wise."[4]

Al-Dahhak[5] related on the authority of ibn-'Abbas that the

1. *Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 23: 3.
2. *Surah* III: 184.
3. *Surah* III: 198-99.
4. *Cf.* Matt. 7: 15, 15: 8.
5. Porbably ibn-Sufyan, one of the Companions; see *Tahdhib al-Asma'* p. 321.

Apostle of God once said, 'The learned men of this people are two. First, he whom God has given knowledge which in turn he freely placed at the disposal of his fellowmen, taking from them nothing in return and charging no price for it. He shall be blessed by the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, the beasts of the earth and by the guardian angels[1] He will, on the day of resurrection, appear before God as a noble lord and will join the company of the apostles. Second, he whom God has given knowledge which he withheld from his fellow men, using it to enrich himself; the same will on the day of resurrection be bridled with a bit of fire while a crier will raise his voice among the crowds and say, 'Behold this man, God gave him knowledge but he withheld it from his fellowmen and used it to enrich himself.' He will continue to be tormented until all men are judged."[2] More drastic than this is what has been related concerning a certain man who was in the service of Moses and went around saying, "Moses, the friend of God, has told me,' "Moses, the confidant of God, has told me," "Moses the intimate of God, has told me" and so on until he became very wealthy. Then he disappeared and Moses began to inquire about him in an attempt to find him. Finally there came to Moses one day a man leading a pig with a black rope tied to its neck. As the man stood before Moses the latter said, "Knowest thou such and such a man?" To which the visitor replied, "Yes I do. He is this pig." On seeing that Moses exclaimed, "O God! I beseech Thee to transform this creature into his former state in order that I may ask him why and how such a thing has come upon him." But God declared unto Moses in a revelation saying, "Not even if thou callest upon Me by what Adam hath called would I grant thy request. Nevertheless I shall tell thee why I have brought this upon him. It is because he was wont to use religion to gain the world."

Still more drastic than either is what is related on the authority of Mu'adh ibn-Jabal who heard the Prophet say, "Among the afflictions of the learned man is to prefer talking to listening. Talking

1. Ar. *al-Kiram al Katibun; cf supra*, p. 87. They are also known as *al-Hafazah*.
2. *Cf. Ibn-Majah*, Intro., 24: 1.

involves embellishments and accretions, and those given to it are not safe from error, while in silence is safety and wisdom."

Among the learned are those who would guard their knowledge and dislike the idea of sharing it with others — these will occupy the first depth in Hell. There are others who are in the habit of regarding their knowledge as equivalent to power and position; and if they are ever contradicted or slighted they become infuriated — these will occupy the second depth in Hell. Others confine their knowledge to the circles of nobility and wealth and deem the poor classes unworthy of it — these will occupy the third depth in Hell. Others appoint themselves judges and hand down faulty opinions — these will occupy the fourth depth in Hell. Other learned men employ in their discourses Jewish and Christian arguments in order to make their erudition seem great — these will occupy the fifth depth in Hell. Others regard their knowledge as something virtuous and honourable and continually dwell on it before men — these will occupy the sixth depth in Hell. And finally there are the learned men who are the victims of vanity and conceit. Whenever they preach they upbraid, and whenever they are admonished they show resentment — these will occupy the seventh depth in Hell. Therefore O brother, observe silence, for through it you will overcome Satan. Do not laugh without cause and do not move without direction.

According to another tradition we are told "Verily man may possess a reputation extending over East and West; but before God it would not amount to the weight of the wing of a mosquito."

It has been related that a certain man from Khurasan who had attended one of the circles of al-Hasan al-Basr came back after the meeting with a bag containing five thousand dinars and ten garments of the finest silk and said, 'O abu-Sa'id, here is some pocket money and a change of clothes." In answer al-Hasan said, "May God save thee. Gather up the money and thy garments for I have no need for either. Verily he who occupies a position like mine and will accept from people such things as thou has offered, will on the day of resurrection meet God in dishonour."

It has also been related on the authority of Jabir[1] that he heard the Apostle of God say, "Do not attend the circle of any learned man except him who would call upon you to relinquish five things in favour of five others, namely to relinquish doubt in favour of belief, hypocrisy in favour of sincerity, worldliness in favour of asceticism, pride in favour of humility, and enmity in favour of love."

God said, "And (Qarun) went forth to his people in his pomp. Those who were greedy for this present life said, 'Oh that we had the like of that which hath been bestowed upon Qarun! Truly he is possessed of great good fortune. But they to whom knowledge had been given said, 'Woe to you! The reward of God is better for him who believeth'."[2] Thus God identified the people of learning as those who prefer the hereafter to this world.

Another characteristic expected of learned men is that their works should not contradict their words. In fact they should not demand anything unless they are ready to be the first to do it. Thus God said, "Will ye enjoin what is right upon others, and forget yourselves?"[3] And again, "Most hateful is it to God that ye say that which ye do not."[4] God said again in the story of Shu'ayb,[5] "I will not follow you in that which I myself forbid you."[6] And again, "But fear God and He will give you knowledge."[7] God also said, "Fear God and know..."[8] and again, "Fear God and hearken...."[9] Said God to Jesus, "O thou son of Mary! Warn thyself and when thou art warned, warn the people. Otherwise thou shouldst be ashamed of Me."[10]

The Apostle of God said, "The night I was carried to heaven, I passed by several people whose lips were being cut off with scissors

1. Ibn-'Abdulah al-Ansari, (A.H. 78/A.D. 697); see ibn-Qutaybah, pp. 156-57.
2. *Surah*, XXVIII: 79-80.
3. *Surah*, II: 41.
4. *Surah*, LXI: 3
5. One of the prophets menntioned in the Qur'an. See *Surahs* VII: 83, 86, 88, 90, sea; XI: 85, 89, 93, 97: XXVI: 177; XXIX: 35.
6. *Surah*, XI: 90.
7. *Surah*, II: 282.
8. *Surah*, II: 190.
9. *Surah*, V: 107.
10. *Cf.* Luke 4: 23.

The Book of Knowledge

of fire. On asking them who they were, replied, 'We were learned men who were wont to enjoin good but do it not and to forbid evil but commit it ourselves'"[1] He also said, "The destruction of my people is brought about by a wicked learned man and an ignorant worshipper. The worst people are the wicked learned men and the best are the good learned men."[2]

Al-Awza'i[3] once said, "The sarcophagi[4] of the unbelievers complained to God of the stench of the corpses they contain. Thereupon God revealed unto them that the stench of the corpses of the teachers of falsehood would be worse." Al-Fudayl ibn-'Iyad once said, "I have been informed that on the day of resurrection the wicked learned men will be brought to judgment before the idolators." Abu-al-Darda' said, "Woe once to him who doth not know, and woe seven times to him who doth know but doth not do accordingly." Al-Sh'bi also said, "On the day of resurrection a group from the people of Paradise will confront a group from the people of Hell and ask them, 'What caused you to be thrown into Hell when we were admitted into Paradise through your instruction and teaching?' To which the latter will reply, 'We were wont to enjoin good but do it not and to forbid evil but commit it ourselves'."

Hatim al-Asamm[5] said, "No one on the day of resurrection would be more sorrowful than he who had taught men knowledge which they put in practice and which he himself neglected; consequently they were saved through him and he was doomed." Malik ibn-Dinar said, "If he learned man does not do according to his knowledge, his words will fail to penetrate the hearts of his hearers just as the dew fails to soften the rocks."

1. *Cf. Hikyat al-Awliya* Vol. II, p. 387.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, 242.
3. 'Abd-al-Rahman ibn-'Umar, founder of the Awza'i system in Syria. He worked in Beirut and d. A.H. 157/A.D. 774. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 492-93.
4. Ar. *nawawis* pl. of *nawas* from Gr.
5. A.H. 237/A.D. 851-52. See ibn-al-'Imad al-Hanbali, *Shadharat al-Dhahab fi Akhbar man Dhahab* (Cairo, 1350), Vol. II, p. 87; al-Sha'rani, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra (Cairo, 1343), Vol. I, pp. 68-69.

The poet said:

Admonisher of men, thou wouldst be indicted when
Thou chidest them for that which thou thyself dost do;
Advice thou givest and then thyself the sin commit
And scoff the love of life while loving it more than they.

And another said:

If thou condemn a sin and then commit
The same transgression, shame upon thy head.

Ibrahim ibn-Adham[1] said, "While in Makhah, I came across a stone on which was inscribed, "Turn me over and thou shalt have warning'. Thereupon I turned it over and lo and behold I found inscribed on it, 'If thou actest not according to thy present knowledge, why then shouldst thou seek new knowledge'?" Ibn-al-Sammak[2] once said, "Many are they who remind others of God while they themselves forget Him; who frighten others of God while they trespass against Him; who draw others near to God while they themselves are far from Him; who call others unto God while they themselves flee from Him; who read God's Holy Books while they themselves deviate from His way!" Ibraham ibn-Adham also said, "In speech we are always careful to use a language free of error, but when it comes to deeds we commit errors and fall short of the ideal set before us." Al-Awza'i said, "When boasting asserts itself, humility disappears."

Makhul[3] related that 'Abd-al-Rahman ibn-Ghanam[4] said, "Ten of the Companions of the Apostle of God told me, 'As we were studying one day in the mosque of Quba[5] the Apostle of God came

1. A.H. 161/A.D. 778; see ibn-'Asakir, Vol. II (Damascus, 1330), pp. 167-96; al-Kutubi, *Fawat al-Wafayat* (Bulaq, 1283), Vol. I, pp. 3-4.
2. A.H. 183/A.D. 799. See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, pp. 296-97.
3. Al-Shami. (A.H. 113/A.D. 731). See ibn-Qutaybah, p. 230, ibn-Khallikan, Vol. II, pp. 585-86. He is also known sa al-Dimashqi.
4. A.H. 78/A.D. 697, see ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 152; *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* Vol. I, p. 48.
5. A village two milies south-east of al-Madinah. Its mosque is celebrated in Islam and is said to have been the mosque of piety (*al-taqwa*).

upon us and said: You may study whatever you wish, but God will not reward you unless you do according to that knowledge'."[1] Jesus said, "The parable of him who acquires knowledge but does not accordingly, is like the parable of the woman who has secretly committed adultery and, on becoming pregnant, her sin becomes known. So it is with him who does not do according to his knowledge; on the day of resurrection he will be openly disgraced by God." Mu'adh ibn-Jabal said, "Beware of the learned man's error, which because of the exalted position of its perpetrator, is emulated by men." 'Umar said, "Through the error of a learned man a whole people may be led to error." "Three things will bring about the end of time; one of these three is the error of the learned man." Ibn-Mas'ud said, "There will come a time wherein the sweetness of hearts will become salty. At that time neither he who possesses knowledge nor he to whom it is imparted will reap any benefit therefrom. The hearts of the learned men will be like the saline land; the rains of heaven will fall upon it but fail to make it fresh." This will take place when the hearts of learned men incline after the love of this world and give it preference over the hereafter. Then will God rob men of the springs of wisdom and will extinguish the lights of the true faith in their hearts. When you meet the learned among them he will protest before you his fear of God while trespassing and sin are evident in his deeds. How fat then are the tongues and how lean the hearts. Verily, by God — there is none but He — this would not have been so if the teachers had taught for the sake of God and the students had studied for His sake."

The following is written in both the Bible and the Gospel, "Seek no new knowledge unless you have put into practice what you already know." Hudhayfah[2] said, "You are in a time wherein anyone who will neglect a tenth of his knowledge will surely perish; but the time will come wherein anyone who will put into practice a tenth of his knowledge, the same will be saved because the idle are numerous."

1. *Hikyat al-Awliya'*, Vol. I, p. 236.
2. Ibn-al-Yaman al-Sahabi (A.H. 36/A.D. 657). See ibn-Qutaybah, pp. 134-35

What is true of the learned men is true of the judges concerning whom the Prophet said, "There are three kinds of judges: One judges justly with knowledge; the same will inherit Paradise. Another judges unjustly whether or not he has knowledge; the same will roast in Hell fire. A third judges contrary to the ordinances of God; the same will also roast in Hell fire."[1] K'ab[2] said, "At the end of time there will be learned men who will urge people to abjure this world while they themselves renounce it not; they place the fear of God in the hearts of men while they themselves fear Him not; they forbid men to seek the favour of those in authority while they themselves curry favour with them; they prefer this world to the hereafter, slander everyone, associate with the rich and avoid the company of the poor, they are jealous of one another concerning knowledge and fight over it as women fight over the love of men; the anger of one of them is aroused if his companion would talk to another besides himself. Verily they are the enemies of the Merciful One."

The Prophet said, "Verily Satan may bait you with knowledge." When asked how would that be, Muhammad replied that Satan would say to you, "Seek ye knowledge and do nothing until ye master it." Then will man continue to seek knowledge and defer action until he finally dies having done nothing.

Sirri al-Saqti said, "A certain man who was overzealous in mastering all esoteric knowledge suddenly withdrew from the world and devoted his life to worship. Thereupon I asked him why he had done so. To which he replied, "I saw in a dream someone say unto me, 'How long will you persist in wasting knowledge?' I replied, 'Verily I shall study and preserve it.' He said, 'The preservation of knowledge lies in putting it into practice.' Consequently I dropped seeking knowledge and bent myself on work and action." Ibn Mas'ud

1. *Al-Tirmidhi*, al-Ahkam, 1; *ibn-Majah*, al-Ahkam, 3.
2. *Al-Ahbar* (A.H. 32/A.D. 652-3). See ibn-Qutaybah, p. 219; M. Schmitz, art. "*K'ab* al-Ahbar" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

said, "Knowledge is not the prolific retention of tradition, but rather the fear of God."[1]

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "You may study whatever you wish, but God will not reward you unless you do according to that knowledge. Verily the concern of the insolent is the retention of tradition and that of the learned men is wisdom." Malik ibn-Anas said, "Verily the seeking of knowledge as well as the imparting of it is good, provided the intentions are also good. Above all seek your daily provision of knowledge and let nothing else interfere." Ibn-Mas'ud said, "The Qur'an was revealed in order that men may direct their lives according to its teaching. But instead you have made the study of it your life work. There will also come a time when some will attempt to modify it — these are not the worthy among you". The learned man who does not do according to his knowledge is like a sick man who prescribes treatment for others, or like a hungry and half starved man who works out delicious menus of food but cannot taste them. Describing a similar thing God said, "But woe be unto you for what ye utter (of God)."[2] And according to a tradition the Prophet said, "Of the dangers which threaten my people I fear nothing except the error of the learned man and a hypocrite discussing the Qur'an."[3]

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he be concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, useful in the hereafter and conducive to good work (*ta'at*). He should avoid those branches of knowledge which are of little use and which lend themselves to disputation and argument: Thus he who shuns the science of practical religion and takes to disputation is like a sick man suffering from many diseases who meets a clever physician, and despite the fact that the time is precious and limited, he wastes it in inquiring about the properties of drugs and medicines and about the curiosities of the medical profession and neglects the all important question of his own affliction. This certainly is the limit of insolence.

1. *Hikyat al-Awilya*, Vol. 1, p. 131.
2. *Surah* XXI: 18.
3. *Cf. al-Darimi*, Intro., 23.

It has been related that a certain man came to the Apostle of God and said, "Teach me some of the strange facts of knowledge." To which the Apostle replied, "What hast thou done with the beginning of knowledge?" "But what is the beginning of knowledge?" the man retorted. The Prophet replied, "Hast thou known the exalted Lord?" "Yes", said the man. "And what hast thou done for Him?" "Oh well," replied the man. "And has thou know what death is?" added the Prophet. "Yes", replied the man. "And what hast thou prepared for it?" Inquired the Prophet, "Oh well," protested the man. Thereupon the Prophet said, "Go thou first and do these things and then come and we shall teach thee some of the strange facts of knowledge."

The knowledge acquired should be like that which Hatim al-Asamm, the disciple of Shaqiq al-Balkhi[1] learned from his teacher. Thus it is said that Shaqiq once asked Hatim how long he had been in his company. Hatim replied, "Thirty-three years." Shaqiq then said, "And what have you learnt during this period?" "Eight things," replied Hatim. Thereupon Shaqiq exclaimed, "Verily we are God's and unto Him is our return. I have spent my life trying to teach you but you have learnt only eight things!" Hatim replied, "Frankly I have learnt nothing else and I do not like to lie about it," Shaqiq then said, "Well, out with these things and let me hear them." Hatim then said, "I looked around and beheld that every man has something or someone whom he loves and with whom he remains until the hour of death arrives, at which time they part. Consequently I made charity the object of my love so that when the hour of death arrives the object of my love accompanies me to the grave." "Thou hast done well, Hatim," said Shaqiq, "let us now hear the second thing thou hast learnt " Hatim replied, "I have pondered over the words of God when he said, 'But as to him who shall have feared the majesty of the Lord, and shall have refrained his soul from lust, verily, Paradise — that shall be his dwelling place,'[2] and have come

1. According to ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 404, Shaqiq, died in A.H. 153/A.D. 770; while according to ibn-al-'Imad al-Hanbali, *Shadharat al-Dhahab fi Akhbar man Dhahab* (Cairo, 1350), Vol. I, p. 341, he died in A.H. 194/ A.D. 810.
2. *Surah*, LXXIX: 40–41.

to know that the words of God are the truth. Consequently I have mortified myself and suppressed lust until my soul found its abode in the obedience of God. Thirdly, as I looked around the people I found that everyone treasures and exalts whatever valuable things he possesses. I then turned to the words of God, 'All that ye possess passeth away but that which is with God abideth',[1] and began to give unto God whatever valuable things fell into my hands. Fourthly, as I looked around I saw that everyone places his trust in wealth, descent, honour, and lineage — things which on examination I found to be empty. I then pondered over the words of God, 'Verily the most honourable of you in the sight of God is the most pious of you,'[2] and immediately turned with all my soul to piety in order that I may become honourable before God.

"Fifth, I looked around and beheld these people slandering and cursing one another, all because of jealousy. Then I turned to the words of God, 'It is We who distribute their subsistence among them in this world's life,'[3] and consequently I abjured jealousy and extended my love to all realizing that man's lot is from God. As a result I dislike people no more.

"In the sixth place, I saw men oppress and fight one another. Whereupon I turned to the words of God, 'Verily Satan is your foe; for a foe then hold him.'[4] Accordingly I took Satan for a foe and ceased to hate people.

"The seventh thing I learnt was the following: As I looked around I saw that everyman was running after bread, and debasing himself and committing all manner of unlawful things in the effort to gain his end. Then I recalled the words of God, 'There is no moving thing that moveth upon the face of the earth but its provision is from Me'.[5] Realizing that I was one of those moving things whose provision is from God, I devoted myself to the things which are God's, and entrusted my fate into His hands.

1. *Surah*, XVI: 98.
2. *Surah*, XLIX: 13.
3. *Surah*, XLIII: 31.
4. *Surah*, XXXV: 6.
5. *Surah*, XI: 8.

"The eighth thing which I learnt was this: I looked around and found that every man has placed his trust in something created — one in his possessions and another in his wealth, a third in his profession and the fourth in his health. In short all created beings placed their faith in things which are like themselves created. I then turned to the words of God, 'And to him who putteth his trust in Him will God be all-sufficient,'[1] and from that moment on I placed my trust in God, verily He is all-sufficient."

Then Shaqiq said, "O Hatim, may God prosper thee. Verily I have examined the Pentateuch, the Gospels, the Psalms, and the great Qur'an and found that all goodness and religion centre around these eight things; whoever would practise them would conform to the teachings of these four books."

No one bothers about the acquisition of this type of knowledge or even acknowledges its existence except the learned men of the hereafter; while the learned men of this world apply themselves to those branches of knowledge which help to gain for them wealth and position, neglecting all the knowledge which God sent the Prophets with to impart in this world.

Al-Dahhak ibn-Muzahim[2] once said, "When I was young the learned men used to teach one another piety, but nowadays they learn nothing but scholastic wrangling (*kalam*)."

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he be not disposed to indulgence in his food and drink, and luxury in his dress, furniture, and housing. Rather he should prefer economy in all things, emulating thereby the blessed Fathers. He should be more readily satisfied with the least of everything, and the closer he draws to penury the closer he draws to God and the greater will his rank be among the learned men of the hereafter. This is attested by the story related about Ibrahim al-Khawwas[3] who was a friend of Hatim al-

1. *Surah*, LXV: 3.
2. A.H. 102/A.D. 720-21; see ibn-Qutaybah, p. 232.
3. A.H. 291/A.D. 904; see al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, Vol. VI, pp. 7-10; al-Sha'rani, Vol. I, pp. 83-84.

Asamm Said Ibrahim "Once upon a time I and three hundred and twenty pilgrims arrived at al-Rayy in the company of Hatim. We were all headed to Makkah for the pilgrimage. The men had their woollen cloaks but lacked both provisions and provision bags. On arriving at al-Rayy we came upon a merchant of abstemious habits who loved the poor and therefore offered us shelter and food for the night. In the morning our host asked Hatim whether or not he had anything to do because he wanted to call on a certain sick jurist in the town. Hatim replied 'Visiting the sick is meritorious, and hearkening unto the learned is a form of worship. I shall therefore accompany you.' The sick jurist was Muhammad ibn Muqatil,[1] the judge of al-Rayy. As they arrived at the gate of his mansion they beheld a great and imposing palace. This made Hatim wonder and say (to himself), 'Such a palace is the property of a learned man!" On being admitted they entered the palace and lo, they were in the midst of an imposing wide, and spacious house with luxurious curtains and draperies. But Hatim still wondered. They then stepped into the hall in which the patient lay on a soft mattress. Over his head stood a lad waving a fan. While Hatim remained standing the merchant sat down beside ibn-Muqatil and inquired about his condition. Noticing that Hatim was still standing, ibn-Muqatil motioned him to take a seat but Hatim declined. Ibn-Muqatil then inquired whether or not Hatim wanted anything done for him, to which Hatim replied, 'Yes I wish to ask you a question.' 'Ask', said ibn-Muqatil. Hatim replied, 'Sit up that I may ask thee.' Ibn Muqatil sat up and Hatim proceeded to ask him saying, 'From where did you get your learning?' 'From trustworthy reporters who related their knowledge to me directly,' said ibn-Muqatil. 'And wherefrom did they get theirs?' asked Hatim. 'From the Companions of the Apostle of God,' replied ibn-Muqatil. 'And wherefrom did the Companions get theirs?' asked Hatim. From the Apostle of god,' replied ibn-Muqatil. 'And the Apostle?' inquired Hatim. 'From Gabriel who got his from God,' replied ibn-Muqatil. 'Tell me then,' said Hatim, 'in that which Gabriel received from God and transmitted to the Apostle who in turn passed it on to his

1. Unidentified.

Companions who conveyed it to trustworthy reporters who in turn gave it to you, did you hear of any learned men who advanced in worth before God because he led a life of luxury in his house and because his wealth exceeded that of a prince?' 'No', said ibn-Muqatil. 'What have you learnt then from those trustworthy reporters?' asked Hatim. To this ibn Muqatil replied, 'I have learnt that he who renounces this world and seeks the next, showing love to the poor and preparing for the hereafter, will be favoured by God.' Hatim then exclaimed, 'The example of whom have you followed, that of the Prophet and his Companions and their virtuous followers or that of Pharaoh[1] and Namrud,[2] the first to employ gypsum and bricks in masonry? You teachers of falsehood, the ignorant man who is rabidly desirous of the pleasures of this world would see you and those of your kind and would say to himself that if the learned men lead such a life, there is no reason why he should not do the same.' Having said this, Hatim left, and ibn-Muqatil's sickness became more acute. The details of the incident soon spread among the people of al-Rayy and they informed Hatim that al-Tanafisi[3] in Qazwin was more extravagant. Hearing this Hatim proceeded to Qazwin and on his arrival, called on al-Tanafisi and addressed him saying, 'May God have mercy upon you, Sir; I am a non-Arab (*a'jami*) who wishes you would teach me the elements of my religion and the commencement of my prayer, namely, how to perform the ceremonial of ablution preparatory to worship.' Al-Tanafisi rose up (to demonstrate the ceremonial) while Hatim watched. Al-Tanafisi performed the ablution applying water thrice to those parts of his body which, according to the ritual, should be washed, and told Hatim to perform the ceremonial in the same way. Hatim then said, 'Could you please stay where you are until I perform the ceremonial before you and thus

1. *Cf. Surahs* XXVII: 38, LX: 38; see also al-Tabari, *Jami' al Bayan* (Cairo 1323-30), Vols. XX, p. 49, XXIV, p. 43, where Pharaoh is said to have been the first to use mortar and brick in masonry.
2. Al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 217, 219, 220, 252-65, 319-25; al-Tha'alibi, pp. 68-70; Bernard Heller, art. "Namrud" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
3. Probably abu-'Abdullah Muhammad ibn-Ubayd ibn-abi-Umayyah, (A.H. 204/A.D. 819-20); see *ibn-S'ad*, Vol. VI, p. 277; *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Vol. 1, pp. 304-5.

be sure I have learnt it correctly?' Thereupon al-Tanafisi moved aside and Hatim proceeded with his ablution. When he got to the washing of his arms up to the elbows he applied water four times. Al-Tanafisi who was watching protested saying, 'You have been extravagant.' 'In what respect,' inquired Hatim. 'In washing your arms four times,' was the reply. 'Great God!' exclaimed Hatim, 'for the use of an extra handful of water you think I have been extravagant; but your indulgence in all this luxury you do not consider to be extravagance!' Al-Tanafisi then realized that Hatim's real purpose was to reprimand rather than to learn. He consequently locked himself up in his home and saw no one for forty days"

When later Hatim entered Baghdad, its inhabitants came to him and said, "O abu-'Abd al-Rahman, you are a stammering non-Arab, yet no one ever talks to you without being silenced. Hatim replied, "Three characteristics enable me to overcome my adversary: I rejoice when he is right, grieve when he is wrong, and endeavour not to act foolishly towards him." When Ahmad ibn-Hanbal heard this, he said, "Allah be praised; how great is the wisdom of this man! Come let us call on him." When the company got to his house, ibn-Hanbal addressed him saying, "O abu-'Abd-al-Rahman, what will insure salvation from this world?" Hatim replied, "You will not be saved until you possess four characteristics: Overlook men's ignorance and spare them yours; give them from you substance and except nothing from theirs. Not unless you do these will you be saved."

"He then proceeded to al-Madinah where he was welcomed by its inhabitants. Addressing them he said, 'which city is this?' They replied, 'The city of the Apostle of God.' He then asked, 'Where is the palace of the Apostle of God so that I might go and worship in it?' 'He had none,' they replied, 'all he had was a modest house half buried in the ground.' Where then are the palaces of his Companions?' 'They had none either,' was the reply, 'all they had were modest houses half buried in the ground.' Thereupon Hatim said, 'Men, this, then, is the city of Pharaoh.' Infuriated they brought him before the governor and said, 'This foreigner says that this is the city of Pharaoh.' The governor asked Hatim why he had said such a thing

and the latter replied, 'Be patient with me please. I am a foreigner, a stranger in this city. When I arrived in it I inquired whose city it was and was told that it was the city of the Apostle of God. I then asked where his palace was? Hatim then recalled the whole story and in conclusion quoting the words of God, 'Ye had in the Apostle of God a good example,'[1] said, 'Whose example have you then followed, that of the Apostle of God or that of Pharaoh, the first to employ gypsum and brick in masonry?' Hearing that, they released him and let him alone." This then is the story of Hatim al-Asamm. Other stories from the lives of the Fathers concerning their disregard for physical comforts and the use of ornaments will be related in due course.

The truth of the matter is that the use of permissible things for ornament is not unlawful although its practice develops a fondness for it which is hard to undo. Persistence in it is not possible except through practices which will inevitably lead to committing sins such as adulation, compromise, and hypocrisy as well as to other prohibited offenses. It is, therefore, wise to avoid these things because whoever indulges in the luxuries of this world would never be safe. Had safety been compatible with indulgence in luxury, the Prophet would not have been insistent on renouncing this world and all its pleasures even to the extent of taking off the embroidered shirt[2] and removing the gold seal-ring whenever he delivered a sermon (*khutbah*),[3] which thing will be discussed later.

It has been related that Yahya ibn-Yazid al Nawfali[4] once wrote to Malik ibn-Anas saying:

"In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate.
May His blessing be on His Apostle Muhammad.

From Yahya ibn-Yazid ibn-'Abd-al-Malik to Malik ibn-Anas:

I have been informed that you wear fine clothes, eat choice

1. *Surah*, XXXIII: 21.
2. *Ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. I, pt. 2, p. 152.
3. *Ibid*, Vol. I, Pt. 2, pp. 160-61.
4. A.H. 165/A.D. 781-82; see al-Sam'ani, p. 571 a-b.

food, recline on comfortable couches, and station at your door chamberlains. At the same time you have assumed the seat of learning and men have come to you from every direction, selecting you as their *imam* and accepting your pronouncements as the final word. Fear then God and humble yourself. I have written to you this letter of advice. No one besides God has seen its contents. Peace be with you."

Malik wrote back saying:

"In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate. May His blessing be on Muhammad, our Lord, and on His Companions.

From Malik ibn-Anas to Yahya ibn-Yazid:
The peace of God be upon you.

"I have received your letter which I accept as the token of your interest and sympathy, and as the evidence of your refined character. May God bless your piety and reward and prosper you for your advice. I seek the help of God; there is no strength nor power but in Him.

"As to your charge that we eat choice food, wear fine clothes, station chamberlains at our door, and recline on comfortable couches, may we state that at times we do all these but usually beg the forgiveness of God. May we, however, add that God said in His Book, 'Say: What hath prohibited God's goodly raiment, and the healthful viands which He hath provided for His servants?'[1] Furthermore we know very well that abstinence from these things is better than indulgence in them. At any rate do not neglect us in the matter of writing and we shall not forget you. Peace be with you." See, then, the sense of justice which Malik displayed: he admitted that to abstain from these things was better than indulgence in them, yet at the same time he handed down the opinion that they were permissible, and he was right in both. Thus it may be possible for men of the calibre of Malik, whose sense of justice enabled him to admit the fairness of such advice, to confine themselves to that which is

1. *Surah* VII: 30.

permissible without either hypocrisy or deception and without overstepping their bounds and doing that which is reprehensible. But this is not possible for others, because to flirt with luxury in those things which are permissible is extremely dangerous. It is far removed from the fear of God which is the quality of the learned men of God. Characteristic of the fear of God, however, is to avoid all manner of risk.

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he keeps away from the magistrates and, as long as he can help it, not to come near them at all, and rather avoid their company despite any efforts on their part to seek him out, because the world is attractive and inviting while the power to dispense with its riches is in their hands. To associate with them, therefore, would necessarily involve the learned man in seeking their approval and winning their hearts, although they are unjust and unrighteous. It is, then, the duty of every religious man to censor them by exposing their tyranny and decrying their practices. For he who frequents their palaces will either seek their favour and consequently forget the blessings which God has bestowed upon him, or hold his peace and allow their misdeeds to go uncensored, thereby courting their favour. He may also undertake to justify their sins and improve their standing in order to gain their pleasure, which is the limit in perjury and falsehood. Or he may hope to share their luxury, which is downright lawlessness. (A discussion of what is permissible to accept from the riches of magistrates and what is not permissible, especially such things as jobs and rewards, will be taken up in the Book on the Lawful and the Unlawful). In short, their company is a source of evil and it is, therefore, necessary for the learned men of the hereafter to be careful and beware.

The Prophet said, "He who goeth out to the desert to live becometh hardy and he who devoteth himself to the chase becometh unmindful, while he who frequenteth the company of magistrates is led astray.[1] And again, "Ye will have rulers some of whom ye will find out and then reject. He that rejecteth them will be acquitted and

1. *Al-Tirmidhi*, Fitan, 69.

he that abhorreth them will be saved. But he that approveth of their ways and followeth their example will be rejected by God." "Shall we then fight them?" the Prophet was asked. "No", he replied, "not as long as they pray."[1]

Sufyan al Thawri said, "There is in hell a valley which is not inhabited except by the Qur'an readers who frequent the palaces of the king." Hudhayfah said, "Expose not yourselves to temptation!" He was then asked, "What temptation?" "The gates of the rulers," he replied, "into which you enter giving your approval to their lies and praising them for virtues they do not possess."

The Apostle of God also said, "As long as the learned men associate not with the rulers, they are the deputies of the Apostles of God over His servants. But when they associate with rulers they betray the Apostles. Beware, therefore, of them and avoid them." (This tradition was related by Anas).

Al-A'mash was once told, "You have revived knowledge through your many disciples." But he said, "Wait! One-third of these disciples pass away before its knowledge matures; another, which hangs around the gates of the rulers, is the worst of all men; while of the remainder only a few succeed." For this reason S'aid ibn-al-Musayyab said, "If you see a learned man frequent the houses of the rulers, beware of him because he is a thief." Al-Awza'i said, "There is nothing more hateful to God than a learned man who frequents the house of a governor.

The Apostle of God also said, "The worst learned men frequent the houses of the rulers while the best rulers frequent the houses of the learned men." Makhul al-Dimashqi said, "He who has studied the Qur'an and mastered the science of religion yet associates with rulers and flatters them for gain will wade through a sea of fire in the midst of hell and will cross in that flaming sea as many steps as he had taken in the company of rulers."

1. Al-Tayalisi, No. 1595.

Samnun[1] once said, "How stupid is the learned man who is continually sought for in his circle but is never found there; and when the caller inquires about his whereabouts he is said to be at the governor's house." He also said, "I often heard it said that whenever it is discovered that a learned man is fond of this world, people should immediately suspect the sincerity of his religion. Finally I began to do the same myself, so that henceforth I never called on a governor without taking myself to task for it on my leaving him; I usually found that I was to blame despite the face that, as you well know, I have always confronted him with rude and harsh words and repeatedly contradicted his wishes. Still more I had hoped to be spared altogether the humiliation of calling on him, although I have received nothing, not even a drink of water, from him." Continuing, Samnun said, 'Nevertheless the learned men of our time are even worse than the learned men of Israel: they tender the ruler cheap advice and tell him the thing which would please. Were they to remind him of his obligations and of the things wherein lies his salvation, he would have found them boring, and would have disliked their visits to him. Yet this would have been their own salvation before the Lord."

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "There lived before your time a man who had embraced Islam at a very early date and who had enjoyed the company of the Apostle." ('Abdullah ibn-al-Mubarak held that al-Hasan al-Basri had in mind S'ad ibn abi-Waqqas). "He did not frequent the company of governors; on the contrary he avoided them altogether. And so one day his sons pointed out to him that men whose Islam was not as old as his and who, unlike himself, did not enjoy the company of the Prophet, frequent the company of governors, and asked him why he did not do the same. He replied and said, 'O my sons! Shall I go and stand by a stinking corpse surrounded by men? By God! If I can help it I shall never join them ' Then his sons said, 'We shall then die of starvation, father.' To which he replied, 'I would rather starve to death as a believer than die as a fat hypocrite'." Al-Hasan then remarked, 'By God he beat them,

1. Abu-al-Qasim Samnun ibn-Hamzah, died before A.H. 297/A.D. 909-10; see al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh, Baghdad*, Vol. IX, pp. 234-37.

because he had realized that beneath the sod, the flesh and the fat of the man rather than his beliefs, decay." This implies that those who frequent the company of governors can never escape hypocrisy which is contrary to faith and beliefs.

Abu-Dharr once said to Salamah;[1] "O Salamah, frequent not the company of rulers because you get nothing of their wealth without their robbing you of something better of your religion." As a matter of fact this constitutes a great temptation which confronts learned men and places in the hand of Satan a terrible instrument which he can use against them, especially in the case of the learned man who has a pleasing voice and an attractive speech. Satan persists in whispering in his ear that through his preaching and visits to them he may be able to turn them away from injustice and to induce them to observe the dictates of the law, until finally the learned man imagines that his visits to governors are an integral part of religion. However, no sooner does he call on the governors than he begins to pay them compliments and flatter them with praise and eulogy, wherein lies the destruction of religion. Thus it is said that when the true learned men acquire know ledge they go to work accordingly and when they go to work they become absorbed in their work, and when they become absorbed in their work they lose their interest in this world, and when they lose interest in this world they seek the way of God, and when they seek the way of God they turn their back and flee from the world.

'Umar ibn-'Abd al-'Aziz wrote to al Hasan saying, "Peace be upon you. Recommend to me some on whom I can call for aid to enforce the ordinances of God." Al-hasan replied, "The people of religion will have nothing to do with you, and of the people of this world you will have none. Seek, therefore, the noble for they will not dishonour themselves by committing treason." If it is the duty of the people of religion to stand aloof even from such a ruler as 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz who was the greatest ascetic of his time, how then can it be fitting for them to seek and associate with other rulers?

1. Ibn-al-Akwa', (A.H. 74/A.D. 693-94): see ibn-Qutaybah, p. 615; *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. IV, Pt. 2, pp. 38-41.

The early learned men, such as al-Hasan al-Basri, al-Thawri, ibn-al-Mubarak, al-Fuadayl,[1] Ibrahim ibn-Adham, and Yusuf ibn-Asbat[2], repeatedly censored the learned men of this world, both Makkans and Syrians, either for their fondness for this world or for associating with rulers.

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he not be impatient to give his opinion but on the contrary, whenever possible, think twice and be extremely careful. Only when he is asked about something which he knows to be explicity expressed in the Qur'an or tradition, or definitely accepted by catholic consent (*ij'ma'*), or analogy (*qiyas*), should he give his opinion. But whenever he is confronted with something about which he has some doubt, he should say, "I do not know". If he is asked about something on which he has formed an opinion through independent interpretation (*ijtihad*) and speculation (*takhmin*), he should be careful not to commit himself but refer the question to someone else who is more capable than himself. This is wisdom itself because the danger of undertaking independent interpretation is very great.

According to one tradition. "Knowledge comprises three parts: the expressed word of the Qur'an, the observed Usage of the Prophet, and finally a great deal which I do not know."[3] Al-Sh'abi said, "I do not possess even the half of all knowledge." Therefore the reward of him who will abstain from speech where he does not know out of respect to God will not be less than that of him who will speak where he knows, because to confess one's ignorance is the most difficult thing for man to do. Yet this was the custom of the Companions and the Fathers. Thus whenever ibn-'Umar was asked to give an opinion on anything he used to say, "Go unto the governor in whose hand are the affairs of men and place the responsibility upon him." Ibn-Mas'ud said, "He who would express an opinion on every

1. Ibn-'Iyad, (A.H. 187/A.D. 803); see ibn-Qutaybah, p. 256.
2. Died after A.H. 190/A.D. 806; see *al-Fihrist*, p. 184; al-Sha'rani, Vol. I, pp. 52-53.
3. *Cf. ibn-Majah*, Intro., 8.

question put to him is truly mad." And again, "The refuge of the learned man lies in the words 'I do not know.' Whenever he abandons this refuge he will be bested." Ibrahim ibn-Adham said, "There is nothing more formidable to Satan than the learned man who, in both speech and silence, manifests his knowledge. Of him Satan would say, 'Behold his silence is more formidable than his speech'."

Someone, describing the *abdal*,[1] said, "Only when gnawed by the pangs of hunger do they eat; only when overcome by lack of sleep do they rest; and only when the need for speech is imperative do they speak." In other words they do not speak unless they are asked and even then they will not talk if they could find someone to answer for them. If it should become imperative for them to speak they will open their mouths and reply. They considered the practice of starting to speak before being asked a manifestation of a latent lust for flourish.

As 'Ali and 'Abdullah ibn-'Abbas once passed by a man who was addressing a crowd they said, "This man is saying: 'Know me O ye people." Someone has said that to ask the true learned man a question is as difficult as the extraction of one of his molar teeth. Ibn-'Umar used to say, "Do you wish to use us as a bridge by which you could cross over to Hell?" Abu-Hafs al-Naysaburi[2] once said, "The true learned man is he who, when asked a question, would hesitate to reply lest he be told on the day of resurrection, 'From whence have

1. Also *budala'*, sing. *bidi*, *badal* and *Badil*. A degree in the Sufi hierarchical order of saints, who, unknown to the masses, participate by means of their powerful influence in the preservation of the arrangement of the universe. Others hold that the *abdal* are certain righteous men of whom the world is never destitute; when one dies, God substitutes another in his place. They are seventy in number, forty of whom are in Syria and thirty in other countries. Still another group holds that they are substitutes for and successors of the prophets and are seven in number. Through them God takes care of the seven climates. They are respectively the successors of Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Idris (Enoch). Joseph, Jesus, and Adam. See *T'arifat*, p. 44; *Dict. of Tech. Tetms*. pp. 164-48; I goldziher, art. "Abdal" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. *Cf.* also *Kashf al-Mahjub*, p. 214.
2. 'Umar ibn-Salim al-Haddad, (A.H. 270/A.D. 883-4); see al-Sha'rani, Vol. I, 70-71.

you answered the questions (which were put to you)?'" Whenever he was asked a question, Ibrahim al-Taymi[1] used to weep and say, "Is it because you could find no one else that you seek me?"

Abu-al-'Aliyah al-Riyahi,[2] Ibrahim ibn-Adham, and Sufyan al-Thawri used to carry on discussions with two or three men or thereabout, but the moment the number increased beyond that they would stop their discussion and depart.

The Apostle once said, "I do not know whether 'Uzayr[3] was a prophet or not: nor whether Tubba'[4] was accused or not; nor do I know whether dhul-al-Qarnayn[5] was a prophet or not." And when he was asked about the best and worst spots on earth he replied that he did not know, and put the question to Gabriel on the latter's next visit and Gabriel too declared that he did not know and had to wait until God made known to him that the best spots on earth were the mosques and the worst were the market-places.[6]

Ibn-'Umar used to reply to one question out of every ten he was asked, while ibn-'Abbas used to answer nine and decline to reply to the tenth. There were also, among the jurists, men who said, 'We do not know' more frequently than 'We know'. Among these were

1. Died in prison in A.H. 92/A.D. 710-11, when he was locked up by al-Hajjaj; see *al-Fihrist*, p. 183; ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VI, pp. 199-200; al-Sha'rani, Vol. I, pp. 35-26.
2. Rufay', (A.H. 90 A.D. 709); see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VI, Pt. I, pp. 81-85; iibn-Qutaybah, p. 231; al-Sha'rani Vol. I, p. 30.
3. Usually identified with Ezra the scribes. See *Surah*, IX: 30 *Jami'al-Bayan*, Vol. III, pp. 19-21, Vo. X, pp. 78-79; al-Tha'alibi, pp. 329-333; Bernhard Heller art. "Uzair" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
4. The royal title of the kings of the second Himyarite Kingdom (ca. A.D. 300-525, interrupted only by the first Abyssinian period, A.D. 340-78) that has survived in Muslim literature.
5. Alexander the Great. Mentioned in Surah XVII: 82, 85, 93, where he s invested with a divine commission for the extirpation of impiety and idolatry. Later legend makes him a prophet. See *Jami' al-Bayan*, Vol. XVI, PP. 7-12; al-Tha'alibi, pp. 345-56; E. Mittwoch, art. "Dhu'l-karnain" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
6. ***Muslim***, Masajid, 288.

Sufyan al-Thawri, Malik ibn-Anas, Ahmad ibn-Hanbal, al-Fudayl ibn-'Iyad, and Bishr ibn-al-Harith.

'Abd-al-Rahman ibn-abi-Layla[1] once said that he had met in the Madinah Mosque one hundred and twenty of the Companions of the Apostle of God, not one of whom, on being asked a question or invited to express an opinion, would answer but would rather have one of his colleagues spare him the responsibility. And according to another report it was usual for each one of them, on being asked a question, to refer it to his colleague who in turn would do the same, and so on, until it had gone all around the Companions and had finally come back to the first.

It has been related that one of the refugees of the mosque vestibule (*Ashab al-Suffah*)[2] was given a roasted head of a calf, although he was in a dire need for food he would not touch it but passed it on to one of his colleagues who in turn passed it on to another, and so on, until it had finally come back to the first refugee. See, then, how things have become now very different among the learned men. Thus the repulsive things have now become desirable and the desirable, no longer sought.

Attesting to the value of caution in undertaking the responsibility of giving judgment and expressing legal opinions is the authentic tradition which says, "People will not be judged except by three: a governor, a deputy, and an intruder." Someone has related that the Companions used to decline four things: the imamate, legacies

1. A.H. 83/A.D. 702; *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VII, pp. 74-7; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 492.
2. Better known as *Ahl al-Suffah*. Among the believing Makkans who had accompanied the Prophet on his migration to al-Madinah and among those who came from other places, there were some who were destitute, without means or shelter. They, therefore, encamped under *suffah* (the northern part of the mosque which was covered with a roof but had open sides). Here they lived and were provided with food and clothing by the community and were called the guests of Islam (*adyaf al-Islam*). In later times they became highly venerated See *Hikyat al-Awliya'*; Vol. I, p. 337, Vol. II, p. 39; Reckendorf, art. "Ahl al-Suffa" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

(*wasiyah*), deposits (*wadi'yah*), and the handing down of legal opinions (*fatwa or futya*). Another said, that among jurists, the quickest to hand down a legal opinion is the least learned among them, and the most reluctant is the most religious.

The activities of the Companions and their followers (*al-tabi'un*) were confined to five things: reading the Qur'an, building mosques, glorifying (*dhikr*) God, enjoining good, and forbidding evil because of what they heard the Prophet say concerning the son of Adam, namely that, with the exception of three things, all that he says will be held against him. These three are: to enjoin good, to forbid evil, and to glorify God. Said God, "In most of their secret talk is nothing good; but only in his who enjoineth almsgiving, or that which is right, or concord among men."[1]

A certain learned man saw, in his sleep, one of the speculative jurists (*ashab al-ra'y*) of al-Kufah and asked him, "What do you now think of your opinions and theories?" Thereupon the speculative jurist turned his face in agony and said, "We have neither found it worthwhile nor have we liked its outcome." Describing such men abu-Hasan[2] said, "Any one of them would readily express his opinion on problems which would have induced 'Umar ibn-al-Khattab to summon all the men who took part in the battle of Badr for consultation." Except under compelling circumstance silence continued to be the practice of the learned. We are told in our tradition, "If ye see a man given to silence and asceticism seek him because he teacheth wisdom."

It has also been said that the learned men are either ordinary men who hand down legal opinions and are the close friends of rulers or distinguished learned men who are well versed in theology and the works of the heart and spend their lives in the solitude of oratories (*zawaya*)[3] throughout the world.

1. *Surah*, IV: 114.
2. *Ibn-Hasan* in B and C, but more correctly abu-Hasin 'Uthman ibn-'Asim ibn-Hasin. (A.H. 128/ A.D. 745-46); see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VI, p. 224.
3. Sing, zawiyah.

It was customary to liken Ahmad ibn-Hanbal to the Tigris from the water of which everyone drew, and Bishr ibn-al-Harith to a covered well of fresh water visited by a single person at a time. It was also the custom to describe a certain individual as a learned man, another as one who disputes (*mutakallim*), a third as given to more disputation (*kalam*), and a fourth as given more to work (*'amal*). Abu-Sulayman (al-Darani) once said, "Knowledge is closer to silence than to loquacity." It was also said, "When knowledge increases loquacity decreases, but when the latter increases the former decreases."

Salman (al-Farisi)[1] once wrote to abu-al-Darda', to whom he had been united by the Prophet in the ties of brotherhood,[2] saying, "O my brother! I have been told that you have been practising medicine and treating patients. Now if thou be really a physician, speak, for in that would be assurance and healing. But if thou be only a practitioner, for God's sake, do not kill any Muslim." Henceforth abu-al-Darda gave no more medical advice. Whenever Anas was asked anything he used to say, "Ask our master, al-Hasan."[3] And whenever men would inquire of ibn-'Abbas it was his custom to say, "Ask Jabir ibn-Zayd";[4] while ibn-'Umar would say, "Ask Sa'id ibn-al-Musayyab."

It has been related that a certain Companion recited twenty traditions in the presence of al-Hasan al-Basri. He was then asked to explain them but he demurred and said that he had nothing to add. Thereupon al-Hasan proceeded to explain them one by one and all were amazed at his excellent commentary and erudition. Equally amazed, the Companion reached down and picked up a handful of pebbles and throwing them at the company exclaimed, "How dare you ask me about learning when you have this great authority in your midst?"

1. A close Companion of the Prophet. The date of his death uncertain but is generally placed toward the end of A.H. 35/A.D. 556. See *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. IV' Pt. I, pp. 53-67.
2. See *al-Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 64.
3. Al-Basri.
4. Al-Azdi, (A.H. 103/A.D. 721-22); see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VII, Pt. I., pp. 130-33.

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he devotes the greatest part of his attention to esoteric knowledge, the observation (*muraqabah*) of the heart, the path of the hereafter and how to journey thereon, as well as to an abiding faith in finding that path through self-mortification (*mujahadah*) and observation. For self-mortification leads to contemplation (*mushahadah*), and through the intricate details of the sciences of the heart fountains of wisdom will gush forth. Books and formal education are of little help in this field because the wisdom which passes all understanding is only achieved through self-mortification, observation and watching, the active fulfilment of outward and inward duties, coming before God (*julus*) in solitude (*khalwah*) and bringing the heart before His presence (*hudur*) through pure reflection (*fikr*) and sole devotion to Him. This is the key of illumination (*ilham*) and the fountainhead of revelation (*kashf*). For while many a student has persisted in his studies but was unable to go beyond the words he had heard, many have confined their attention in their studies to what was important and were active in works, and bent on the observation of their hearts; consequently God has blessed them with wisdom which passes all understanding. For this reason the Prophet said, "He who would act according to his knowledge would be rewarded by God with further knowledge." It was also said in one of the books of the ancients, "O children of Israel! Say not that knowledge is in the heavens; who then will bring it down to earth? Nor say that it is in the mighty deeps of the earth; who then will bring up to heaven? Nor say that it is beyond the seas: who then will bring it across the waves? Verily knowledge is in your hearts. Follow, therefore, before me in the manner of the angels (*ruhaniyun*) and adopt the ways of the saints (*siddiqun*). Then will I pour of My knowledge into your hearts until they overflow with wisdom."

Sahl ibn-'Abdullah al-Tustari once said, "The learned men, the worshippers, and the ascetics departed from this life with their hearts closed; only the hearts of the saints and the martyrs were opened." He quoted the words of God when He said, "And with Him

are the keys of the secret things; none knoweth them but He."[1] And had it not been for the fact that the enlightenment of the heart of him who has a heart with the inner light determines the esoteric knowledge (*'ilm al-zahir*) the Prophet would not have said, "Consult thy heart whenever they should recommend something to thee and give thee a dispensation to do it." Then he said on the authority of his God, "The servant will continue to draw near unto Me with supererogatory works and meritorious deeds (*nawafil*) until he wins My favour, at which time I shall be his ears and his eyes."[2] Many are the subtle meanings of the mysteries of the Qur'an which dawn upon the hearts of those who have devoted themselves to invocation (*dhikr*) and reflection (*fikr*), but are not found in the books of commentary and remain unknown to the best commentators. Yet when such meanings are revealed to the watchful devotee (*murid*) and are then brought to the attention of commentators they would deem them good and would realize that they are the outcome of the workings of a pure heart and the gracious blessings of God on the high mind which aspires to Him. Similarly the science of revelation (*mukashafah*) and the secrets of the science of practical religion (*mu 'amalah*) as well as the subtleties of the passing thoughts (*khawatir*) of the heart are, each and every one of them, seas the depths of which are too great to be sounded and can be traversed by seekers only to the extent to which each of them has been given the power and the ability to do good. Describing such men, 'Ali, in the course of a long conversation, said, "The hearts are like vessels; the best among them is that which can hold the most of good. Men are of three kinds: divine (*rabbani*) learned men, seekers of knowledge for the hope of salvation, and rude ruffians who follow every cry and are swayed by every passing wind. They follow not the light of knowledge and stand not on its firm foundation. Verily knowledge is better than wealth; for while you guard wealth, it is knowledge which guards over you. Knowledge increases by spending while wealth diminishes therewith. Knowledge is a religion worthy of acceptance. Through it man is assured of the ability to live in accordance with the will of God in this life and of kindly words from his fellowmen after his death. Knowledge governs while wealth is

1. *Surah* VI: 59.
2. *Al-Bukhari*, Riqaq, 38.

governed. With the loss of wealth its value vanishes and its hoarders are dead even while they live. On the other hand the learned men will live as long as time shall last." Taking a deep breath and pointing to his breast, 'Ali said, "Herein is abundant knowledge, but I can find no one to carry it on. Instead I find seekers who I cannot trust; they exploit religion for worldly gain, employ the gifts of God for fastening their yoke on His saints (*awliya'*), and exalt themselves therewith over His people. I find men who follow the righteous but, for the least matter, become the victims of doubt and scepticism. They have neither understanding nor insight. I find gluttons guilty of indulgence, easily led in the ways of lust. I find men lured by the desire to amass wealth and hoard it, who follow their appetite and have closer resemblance to grazing cattle than to human beings. On my God! Thus will knowledge perish when its people die. But the world will not be destitute of men who will champion the cause of God, some openly in public while others secretly for fear of persecution, lest the proofs and evidence of existence be nullified. How many are they and where are they to be found? Such men boast of the smallest number but in worth they are the greatest. They have no equals among men; their strength lies in their heart. Through them God will preserve the proofs of His existence until they entrust His testament to their successors or plant its seeds in the hearts of their fellow-saints. With their knowledge they attacked the basic problem and arrived at the core of the truth, penetrating what the pampered have deemed inaccessible and delighting in what the foolish have feared. They go through this life with bodies, the spirits of which look for heaven. They are the saints of God among His people, His trustees and deputies on earth, and the missionaries (*du'ah*) who summon men to His religion." He then wept and said, "Oh how much I long to see them!" What he mentioned at the end is the description of the learned men of the hereafter, the greater part of whose knowledge is obtained through works and continued self-mortification.

Another characteristic of the learned man is that he should be greatly concerned with the strengthening of his faith (*yaqin*) which is the mainspring of religion. Said the Apostle of God, "Faith is belief

in its entirety." Acquiring the science of faith is, therefore, indispensable. By this I mean its rudiments which, when acquired, will open its path for the heart. For this reason the Prophet said, "Acquire faith." This means that you should associate with those who have faith, receiving from them the science of faith, and persisting in following their example so that your faith may wex strong as has theirs. Furthermore a little faith is better than much work. Thus when the Prophet was consulted concerning a man of much faith and many sins and another who was steadfast in worship but had little faith, he said, "There is none without sin. But anyone who is intelligent by nature and also has faith will not suffer from sin, because whenever he sins he will repent and ask forgiveness. He will then be forgiven and left enough virtue wherewith he will enter Paradise." For this reason the Prophet said, "Verily among the things of which you have been given the least, are faith and patience. Whoever has been given his share of these two would not care what he had missed of night prayer and day fasting." In the testament of Luqman to his son we read, "O my son! Work is not possible except through faith. Man does not accomplish except in proportion to his faith, and does not fail except when it wanes." Yahya ibn-Mu'adh said, "Monotheism (*tawhid*) brings forth light and polytheism (*shirk*), fire. The light of monotheism will wipe out the offences of the monotheism more completely than the fire of polytheism will wipe out the good deeds of the polytheists." By the light of monotheism, Yahya meant faith. God also referred to those who have faith in several places in the Qur'an and pointed out that through faith they receive His blessings and the happiness of the hereafter.

You may say, "What, then, is the meaning of faith (*yaqin*), its strength, and its weakness, since it should first be understood before it can be sought and studied?" Then you should know that the word (*yaqin*) is a homonymous term which two different groups of people apply to two distinct meanings.

To the philosophers (*huzzar*) and scholastic theologians (*muttakallimun*) the terms *yaqin* signifies lack of doubt (i.e. certainty). The readiness of the person to believe a thing falls into four states:

The first is where the evidence for believing and disbelieving is even; it is described by doubt. Thus when you are asked whether or not God is going to punish a certain person whose manner of life is not known to you, are not prepared to affirm or deny either for both are equally possible. Such a state is called doubt (*shak*).

The second state is where you are more inclined to accept one position while realizing that the contrary is possible. But this possibility does not prevent you from giving preference to the former. For example you may be asked whether a certain person whom you know for righteousness and piety will be punished or not if when he dies he is still the same? Because of his evident righteousness you are more inclined to believe that he will not be punished. Nevertheless you admit the possibility that something which requires punishment may have been concealed in his secret life. This admission equals the inclination but does not rule out the possibility that it is the more likely. Such a state is described by the term conjecture (*zann*).

The third state obtains when one is inclined to believe a thing so earnestly that he is taken up by it to such an extent that nothing else seems possible to him and if such a thing ever comes to his mind, he will refuse to believe it. He does not do this because of any definite knowledge; for if he would only examine more carefully the first two states, namely that of doubt and conjecture, he would more readily admit other possibilities. Such a state is described as a belief approaching certainty (*i'tiqad muqarib li-l-yaqin*), which is similar to the belief of the common folk in all legal matters (*shar'i'at*), i.e. they accept as fact that which is simply hearsay. Thus every group is certain of the authenticity of its own system (*madhhab*) and the infallibility of its own *imam* or leader. Should any one member of these groups be reminded of the possibility that his *imam* might be mistaken he would resent it very much and refuse to admitt.

The fourth state is that of definite knowledge (*m'arifah haqiqiyah*) resulting from evidence which leaves no place for doubt or any possibility of doubt. When doubt or any possibility of doubt are ruled out of the state of certainty (*yaqin*) obtains. As an example

of this state we may cite the following: When a wise man is asked, "Is there anything eternal (*qadim*) in existence (*wujud*)?" he will not be able to affirm or deny the question instantly because the eternal is not perceived by the senses (*ghayer mahsus*) unlike, for example, the sun and moon which are so perceived. Furthermore the fact that something eternal exists is not axiomatic in the same way as the fact that two is greater than one is axiomatic; rather it is like the fact that the origination (*huduth*) of anything originated (*hadith*) is impossible without a cause (*sabab*), which is also axiomatic but in a different way. It is therefore the duty of the mind to hesitate to accept spontaneously and intuitively the existence of the eternal. But there are some who may hear these things and on such authority accept them without question, and continue to believe them. This is the belief (*i'tiqad*) which coincides with the state of all the common folk.

There are others who believe only through evidence. These are told that if nothing eternal exists then all existing things are originated; and if all existing things are originated then they are originated without a cause, or some of them are so originated, all of which is impossible and what leads to the impossible is itself impossible. Therefore, out of sheer necessity, the mind is compelled to believe in the existence of something eternal. For there are only three positions: that all existing things are eternal; that all are originated; that some are eternal and some are originated. If all are eternal the question will have been answered since all are held to the eternal. But if all are originated we shall have to accept the impossible, namely origination without a cause. Consequently the third and first positions are established. Every kind of knowledge thus obtained is called certainty (*yaqin*), whether it has been obtained through reasoning (*nazir*) such as that above; or through the mind instinctively, as the impossibility of any originated existence without a cause; or through tradition, as the knowledge that Makkah exists; or through experimentation, such as our knowledge that cooked scammony is a laxative; or through some evidence, as we have already stated. Both the philosophers and the scholastic theologians require the lack of doubt before they use this term. Every part of knowledge which is free from doubt is called certainty (*yaqin*). Consequently certainty is

never described with weakness because there are no degrees in the negation of doubt.

The second application of the term (*yaqin*) is that of the jurists and the Sufis as well as most of the learned men. In it, no attention is paid to either conjecture or doubt but rather to the fact that it takes hold of and prevails over the mind so that it is something said that so and so does not believe in death, although there is no doubt about it; and another has a strong faith that his livelihood is incoming, although it is quite possible that it will never accrue. Thus whenever the soul inclines to the acceptance of anything which prevails over the heart and takes hold of it, and as a result becomes the ruler and dispenser of the soul either by urging it to action or by forbidding therefrom, such a thing is called faith (*yaqin*).

Undoubtedly all men agree concerning the certainty of death and entertain not the slightest doubt regarding its imminence. Yet there are some among them who heed not its approach nor prepare for its advent as though they were not sure of it. Some, on the other hand, are so obsessed by the fear of death that they have directed all their attention towards preparation for it, leaving thereby no room for anything else. Such a state is described as strength of faith. For this reason someone has said, "I have seen nothing so certain and at the same time so completely unheeded as death." In accordance with this terminology faith (*yaqin*) may be described with either strength or weakness.

When we said that it was for the learned men of the hereafter to expend their efforts in the strengthening of the *yaqin* we had in mind both meanings, namely the negation of doubt (i.e. certainty and the giving of full power and control to the *yaqin* over the soul until is becomes the dominant ruler over it and sole dispenser of affairs (i.e. faith).

When you understand this, you will perceive what we mean when we shall say that *yaqin* may be described in three different fashions, as to strength and weakness, greatness and littleness, and finally clearness and vagueness.

As to strength and weakness they are applied to the second technical meaning of *yaqin*, (namely faith), in so far as faith prevails over and takes hold of the heart. The degrees of faith in respect to strength and weakness are unlimited, and the extent to which people will prepare for death varies in accordance with the extent to which their faith may differ in regard to these same terms (namely, strength and weakness).

The existence of varying degrees of clearness and vagueness within the first technical use of the term *yaqin*, (namely certainty), cannot be denied. They exist in the first state, i.e. doubt, as well as in the second, i.e. conjecture. In neither of these could their existence be denied. Nor could the existence of these varying degrees of clearness and vagueness be denied even where doubt has been dispelled. For example you can readily understand that there is a difference between your belief in the existence of Makkah and that of Fadak,[1] or between your acceptance of the historicity of Moses and that of Joshua (*Yusha'*),[2] although you do not really doubt either because the authority for both is tradition. Yet the one is clearer and more vivid in your mind than the other, because its evidence is greater since more historians have mentioned it.

The same thing is true of the philosopher (*nazir*) in connexion with any theory arrived at through deduction; because what he surmises through the evidence of one proof is not as clear in his mind as that which he establishes through the evidence of several proofs, although both are equal in the negation of doubt. This, however, is sometimes denied by the scholastic theologian who draws his knowledge from books and hearsay sources and does not take into consideration what he already knows regarding the variations in those states.

As to littleness and greatness they relate to the appurtenances (*muta'alliqat*) of the *yaqin*. For example a person's knowledge may

1. A small village about six miles north of Madinah. It figured in early Muslim history. See *Yaqut, Buldan*, Vol. III, pp. 855-58.
2. Not mentioned by name in the Qur'an but it is held that *Surah*, XVIII: 59 refers to him.

be described as greater than that of another which meas that his learning is greater. For this reason the learned man may be very well versed in all the contents of the law or in only a part of it.

If you then say that you have understood *yaqin*, its strength and weakness, greatness and littleness, and clearness and vagueness in both its meanings as the negation of doubt and as the taking hold of the heart, and ask what its appurtenance comprise, what the means whereby it is secured are, and how it can be sought (because unless you know how and where to seek it you cannot secure it), then you should know that what the prophets handed down belongs in its entirety to the means whereby the *yaqin* is secured. For *yaqin* represents a specific knowledge while its appurtenances are the bits of information which are contained in the law, and there is no hope of ever counting them. Nevertheless I shall point out some which constitute the major appurtenance.

One of these is the belief in the unity of God (*al-tawhid*). It is acknowledged that all things have come from God, the Cause of all causes (*musabbib al-asbab*), paying no attention to the secondary causes (*wasai't*) and acknowledging that they are all subject to the will of God and have no will of their own. He who believes this has *yaqin*. If, over and above his belief, all possibilities of doubt are removed from his heart, then he possess *yaqin* of the first meaning (i.e. certainty). But if, over and above his belief, a power will prevail over his heart which will remove from it all anger provoked by the secondary causes when they fail him, or gratitude to them when they serve him, and will make him regard these secondary causes merely as instruments in the hand of God in the same way as the pen in the hand of the benefactor when he signs his name, as well as the hand itself, is an instrument for no one will be grateful to either the pen of the hand, or be angry at them, rather he will acknowledge them as two instruments subject to the will of their master, two mediums through which the will was enforced, then he will possess *yaqin* of the second meaning, i.e faith.

The second *yaqin* is the nobler of the two and is the fruit of the

first as well as its life and value. Thus whenever man will examine the sun, moon, and stars as well as the inanimate plants, animals, and all things created, and realize that they are subject to the will of God in the same way as the pen is in the hand of the scribe, and that the eternal power is the source of all, the power of dependence, contentment, and resignation will prevail over his heart and he will possess *yaqin*, becoming free of anger, rancour, envy, and ill-temper. This is one of the doors which leads to the *yaqin*.

Another is confidence that God will guarantee to all their livelihood according to His word when He said, "There is no moving thing that moveth upon the face of the earth but its provision is from Me,"[1] and faith that each individual will receive his portion. It also involves a belief that whatever has been preordained will befall the individual. Whenever this belief prevails over his heart, he will maintain his integrity while seeking a living, and neither his stint nor his greed will increase. Above all he will not regret anything which he missed. Furthermore this kind of faith (*yaqin*) has fostered several good works (*ta'at*) and praiseworthy habits.

Another is to have one's heart possessed by the idea that "whosoever shall wrought an atom's weight of good shall behold it, and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of evil shall behold it."[2] In other words it is to believe in reward (*thawab*) and punishment (*'iqab*) so that one might realize that the relation of the acts of worship to reward is like that of bread to satiety, and sin stands in relation to punishment as poison and venomous vipers stand in relation to death. So just as men, in order to satisfy their hunger, strive to obtain bread and store it, whether its quantity is small or large, so must they strive to fulfil all acts of worship, whether they be few or many. Similarly just as men avoid poisons regardless of the quantity, so must they avoid all sins, the few and the many as well as the minor and the major.

The *yaqin* of the first meaning, (i.e. certainty) is found among all believers while that of the second meaning, (i.e. faith), is

1. *Surah*, XI: 8. 2. *Surah*, XCIX: 7-8.

characteristic of the favourites of God (*al-muqarrabun*). The fruits of this faith (*yaqin*) are genuine observation (*muraqabah*) of the heart in its moments of groping (*harakat*), tranquillity (*saknat*), and passing thoughts (*khatarat*), as well as extreme emphasis on piety and determined resolve to avoid all evils. The stronger the faith the stronger the resolution and the stronger the effort.

Another is the belief that God is constantly watching you, knowing all the cogitations of your conscience and the hidden meditation of your inward thoughts and reflections. This is accepted by every believer who possesses a *yaqin* according to the first meaning, namely certainty, or the negation of doubt; but its second meaning which is the one we have in mind, namely faith, is very scarce and is characteristic of the saints. Its fruit is to make man in his solitude as cultured and refined under all conditions as a man in audience with an exalted king. He fixes his eyes on the king and sits before him in silence, maintaining a polite appearance in all his doings and carefully restraining himself from the slightest thing which may violate etiquette. There will be no disparity between his inward thoughts and his outward deeds because he will realize that God watches his inner life just as men watch his outward behaviour. Consequently his effort to develop and purify his inner life in order to make it acceptable before the encompassing eyes of God should be greater than his effort to make his outward behaviour agreeable to men. This state of faith (*yaqin*) breeds modesty, fear, meekness, lowliness, submission, and obedience as well as other praiseworthy qualities; while these qualities are conducive to many superior good works (*ta'at*).

In every one of these examples the *yaqin* is like the tree; these qualities of the heart are like the branches which shoot out from it; and the good works and acts which result from these qualities are like the fruits and blossoms which sprout out from the branches. The *yaqin*, then, is the origin and the foundation, and has more kinds and variations than we have already mentioned. These we shall discuss in the Quarter on the Saving Matters of Life. For the present what we have already mentioned is enough.

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he be sorrowful, meek, pensive, and silent. The signs of the fear of God should be evident in his appearance, clothes, life, movements, and poise as well as in his speech and silence. No one will ever view him without being reminded of God. His face will reveal his works for the eyes of the righteous one reflect his soul. The marks of the learned men of the hereafter, too, are recognized in their faces[1] which reflect traquillity (*sakinah*), lowliness, and modesty. Thus it has been said, "God has not fitted a man with a garment better than submission with tranquility. It is the garment of the Prophets and the mark of the virtuous and the saints and the learned." On the other hand to chatter and prate and to indulge in excessive laughter as well as temper and flippancy are all the outcome of a life of smugness and ease in which man becomes unmindful of God's terrible punishment and great wrath. It is the practice of the children of this world who have forgotten God rather than that of the learned men, because, as al-Tustari said, "The learned men are of three kinds. The first kind are those who know the commandments of God but not the Days of God (*ayyam Allah*);[2] they are the judges who rule what is lawful and what is unlawful. This knowledge does not develop fear. The second kind are those who know God but not His Days; they are the ordinary believers. The third kind of learned men are those who know God as well as His commandments and Days; they are the saints in whose hearts fear and humility prevail." By the Days of God al-Tustari meant the unknown punishments which God inflicted and His hidden blessings which He bestowed upon the preceding ages, and which He will also visit upon the succeeding generations. Hence anyone whose knowledge encompasses this, his fear of God would increase and his humility would grow.

Hadrat 'Umar once said, "Acquire knowledge and develop thereby poise, dignity, and tolerance. Humble yourselves before your teachers and let your students do the same before you. And be not

1. *Cf. Surah*, XLVII: 29.
2. The Days of God (*ayyam Allah*) are the epiphanies by which He reveals His perfection. See *Dict. of Tech. Terms*, p. 1545.

arrogant in your learning lest your knowledge encourage ignorance." It is also said, "God has not given any of His servants knowledge without giving him tolerance, humility, good nature, and kindliness as well." Of such is the useful knowledge.

We also read in history that, "He to whom God gives knowledge, asceticism, humility, and good-nature is foremost among the pious." And in tradition we read, "Verily there are among my people men who rejoice openly at the extent of the mercy of God and weep in secret for fear of His punishment. They live on the earth but their hearts are in heaven; they themselves are in this world but their minds are focussed on the hereafter. They live in tranquillity and draw near unto God through the means (*wasa'il*)[1] of His grace." Al-Hasan al Basri said, "Tolerance is the vizier of knowledge, kindliness its father, and humility its garment."

Bishr ibn-al-Harith said, "He who seeks position through knowledge and approaches God while his heart is full of hatred, will be detested in heaven and in earth." It is mentioned in the Books of Israel (*al-Isra'i liyat*) that a certain wise man had composed three hundred and sixty works on wisdom and thus earned the sobriquet *al hakim* (the wise). Thereupon God revealed to the Prophet of Israel at that time saying, "Speak unto such and such a person and tell him, 'Thus said the Lord: You have filled the earth with twaddle but you have not mentioned me in a single word: therefore I accept nothing of it." On being so informed, the wise man repented and, abjuring his twaddle, mixed with the common folk and roamed the streets befriending all the children of Israel, and humbled himself. Then God revealed to the Prophet saying, "Tell him, now you have gained my favour."

Al-Awza'i related that Bilal ibn-S'ad[2] used to say, "Whenever you see a policeman you invoke the protection of God

1. Sing, *wasilah*, mentioned in *Surahs* V: 39 and XVII: 59. *Cf. Jami'al-Bayan*, Vol. VI, pp. 146-47.
2. Died during the reign of Hisham I, (A.H. 105-125/A.D. 724-43). See *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 166; also ibn-Asakir, Vol. III, pp. 315-8, where his name appears as Bilal ibn-Sa'id.

against him, but when you see the learned man of this world who curry favour with all people and hanker after position, you do not detest them although of the two the latter are the more detestable." It has also been related that the Apostle of God was once asked, "Which works are the best?" He replied, "To avoid evil and persist in the praise of God." He was then asked, "Who are the best companions?" To which he replied, "A companion who will help when you ask for aid, and will remember you when you forget to ask." "Who, then, is the worst companion?" was the next question. To which he replied, "A companion who will not remember you if you do not remind him and will not help you when you ask for help." He was then asked, "And who is the most learned man?" The Prophet replied, "He who fears God the most." "Tell us, then," they said, "who are the best among us in order that we might sit at their feet?" The Prophet replied, "Those who would remind you of God whenever they are seen." They then asked, "And who are the worst?" To which Muhammad (S.A.W.) said, "Thy forgiveness, O God my Lord!" But they said, "Tell us, O Apostle of God." He then said, "The learned men when they become corrupt."[1] The Apostle also said, "Those who have been most apprehensive in this world will, on the day of resurrection, be the most secure, while those who have wept most will laugh most, and those who have been saddest will be the happiest."

In one of his sermons Hadrat 'Ali said, "My conscience is pledged to God although I am a leader. Verily the crops of no one will wither if they were planted with piety, and the roots of no tree will thirst if it were raised with righteousness. The most ignorant man is he who has picked up haphazardly tidbits of knowledge which carried him into the darkness of sin, yet despite this and despite the fact that he has not spent a single day in study, he has been called learned by disreputable and evil men. He would go after quantity not knowing that little knowledge of the right kind is better than a great deal of it which diverts man from God. He would drink, as it were, from stagnant and stale waters and engage in diverse activities but to no

1. Unidentified.

avail. Then he would sit down to teach men and to explain to them what is obscure. If, however, he would be confronted with a weighty problem he would hand down a wordy and redundant opinion which, rather than remove all ambiguity, would entangle the inquirer in a mess of confusion similar to a cobweb, and would so baffle him as to make it impossible for him to determine whether the man is right or wrong. He is rooted in ignorance and is the victim of diabolical madness. He will not decline to answer that which he does not know and thus avoid error, nor will he strive to gain a strong hold on knowledge that through its mastery he may prosper. Through his ignorance blood is shed, and through his juridical opinions unlawful adultery is rendered lawful. He is not capable of dispensing with the problems which have been submitted to him and is not equal to the task which has been delegated to his care. On such men should fall the worst punishment; they should bewail and lament their fate while they yet live."

Hadrat 'Ali also said, "Hold fast to knowledge when you hear it, and mix it not with jesting lest it be rejected." One of the Fathers said, 'Whenever man jests, his knowledge is impaired.' It was also said, "When the teacher is so fortunate as to possess patience, humility, and good nature, the student's lot will be perfect; similarly whenever the student possesses intelligence, good manners, and keen understanding, the teacher will have nothing more to desire." In short the qualities which the Qur'an mentions are indispensable to the learned men of the hereafter because they should study the Qur'an in order to go about doing good and not to occupy positions of power and prestige. Ibn 'Umar said, "For a short period of time it was customary for us to be instructed in the elements of faith before the Qur'an. Whenever a *Surah* was revealed we would learn the lawful things it enjoined and the unlawful things it forbade, its commandments and its prohibitions, as well as those things at which we had to stop. But I have also seen men who master the text of the Qur'an before learning the elements of faith. They would read the Qur'an from beginning to end; yet they would not know what it commands and what it prohibits, nor those things at which one should stop. They

would handle these things and toss them about as though they were the most inferior dates in quality." A similar meaning is expressed in another tradition which reads, "As Companions of the Apostle of Allah we were instructed in the elements of faith before the Qur'an; but there shall come after you people who will master the text of the Qur'an before the elements of faith; they will observe the rules of its reading according to the different dialects (*huruf*), but will ignore its precepts and commandments. They will say, "We read the Qur'an; who could read it better than we? We have knowledge of it; who has better knowledge of it than we? This shall be their share." According to another version, "Those men are the most wicked among this people."

It has been said that five qualities inferred from five verses in the Book of Allah are characteristic of the learned men of the hereafter. These qualities are fear of Allah, humility, modesty, good nature, and preference of the hereafter over this world, which is asceticism.

Fear is based on the words of God when He said, "Such only of His servants as are possessed of knowledge fear God."[1] Humility finds its authority in the words of God when He said, "Humbling themselves before God, they barter not His signs for a mean price."[2] Modesty finds its support in the following words of God, "And lower thy wing to the believers."[3] Good nature is inferred from the words of God when He said, "Of the mercy of God thou hast spoken to them in gentle terms."[4] Asceticism has its foundation in the words of God when He said, "But they to whom knowledge had been given said, 'Woe to you! The reward of God is better for him who believeth and worketh righteousness!"[5]

When the Apostle of Allah recited the verse, "And whom Allah shall please to guide, that man's breast shall be open to Islam,"[6] he was asked what it meant and he replied, "When the light is cast into the heart the latter receives it gladly." He was then asked,

1. *Surah*, XXXV: 25.
2. *Surah*, III: 198.
3. *Surah*, XV: 88.
4. *Surah*, III: 153.
6. *Surah*, XXVIII: 80.
6. *Surah*, VI: 125.

"Has that any signs?" To which he replied, "Yes. The renunciation of this world of vanity and delusion, the repair to the hereafter, and the preparation for death before it arrives."

Another characteristic of the learned man is to have most of his study and research directed towards the science of practical religion (*'ilm al a'mal*), especially such influences as would lead to its corruption, perplex the hearts, stir up doubts and provoke evil, for the basic idea of religion is to eschew evil. For this reason it was said:

Evil have I known though not
For evil's sake but to avoid
Its toils; and he who knows it not
Will surely be ensnared thereby.

The practical works are within reach of all, and the best of these works is to persist in the praise of God in thought and word. The difficult part, however, is to determine what things will corrupt practical religion and what things will confuse it. These things are many and its parts are numerous, while a detailed discussion of it is inevitably long. But the need for it is very great, because through these corrupting and confusing influences disaster overtakes the travellers along the path of the hereafter.

The learned men of this world, rather than attending to the problems of their day, pursue the strangest hair-splitting in judicial decisions and cases. They take special pains in formulating hypothetical cases which will probably never take place. But if some of these cases should ever take place, they will not occur in their own experiences but in those of others, in which event there will be many capable of handling them. These pressing problems which they have neglected continue to haunt them night and day, troubling their thoughts and minds, and perturb them in their actions. Thus how far removed from happiness is he who neglects pressing and intimate concerns in favour of the unnecessary concerns, of others, preferring to gain thereby the approval and the plaudits of men rather than those of God. Still worse, the reprobates of this world call such a person a superior man, a thorough scholar, and a versatile learned man. But

his reward from God is that, in this world, he will gain nothing from men's approval of him. On the contrary, misfortunes will overshadow his happiness, and finally he will stand on the day of resurrection bankrupt, and will be filled with regret when he views the gains of the doers of good and the success of those who have won God's favour. Truly this is "the complete ruin", (which is spoken of in the Qur'an)

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "It is agreed that the man whose words bear the greatest resemblance to those of the Prophets and whose way of life is closest to that of the Companions is he whose words are for the greater part concerned with inward thoughts, the influences which corrupt works and perplex minds as well as with the hidden and unknown qualities which characterize the appetites of the soul."

Al-Hasan was also told, "O Abu-Sa'id! You utter words which are never heard from others besides yourself. Whence did you get them?" He replied, "From Hudhayfah ibn-al-Yaman." Hudhayfah was then asked, "We see that you utter words which are never heard from any of the Companions besides you. Whence did you get them?" Thereupon he replied, "From the Apostle of God who favoured me therewith. While others querried him about good, I querried him about evil for fear of falling therein. As to good, I realize that its knowledge will not escape me."[2] At another time the Apostle said "I have come to realize that he who knows not evil knows not good." And according to another version, "People were wont to ask the Apostle saying, 'O Apostle of God! What is the reward of him who does such and such a thing?' and would query him regarding meritorious deeds. But I used to ask him saying, 'O Apostle of God! What would corrupt such and such a thing?" When the Apostle of God saw that I was continually asking him about the bane of good works, he favoured me with the special knowledge."

1. *Cf. Surahs* XXII: II, XXXIX: 17.
2. *Cf. Surah* II: 7, XXXIII; 47, LVII: 13. These refer to the "hypocrities" of al-Madinah who professed to follow Muhammad (S.A.W.) but opposed him secretly.

Hudhayfah was also specially favoured with the knowledge of the hypocrites (*al-munafiqun*), and was unique in his acquaintance with the science and causes of hypocrisy and the subtleties of temptations. For that reason Hadrat 'Umar and 'Usman as well as the elders of the Companions used to query him about the ordinary and particular temptations. It was also customary for him to be asked about the hypocrites, and he would tell how many of them were still alive, but would not reveal their names. Hadrat 'Umar used to ask his advice as to whether he could see in him any traces of hypocrisy, but Hudhayfah always declared him free of that affliction. Furthermore, whenever 'Umar was invited to officiate at a funeral he would first look around and see whether Hudhayfah was present among the mourners, and if he were he would proceed with the service; otherwise he would refrain. Hudhayfah was also called the man with the inner feeling (*sahib al-sirr*). Thus to take care of the stations and states of the heart has always been the concern of all the learned men of the hereafter, because it is the heart which endeavours to draw near to God. Yet this branch of knowledge has now become unknown and forgotten to the extent that whenever a learned man would address himself to any part of it, he would be considered odd and unusual, and his efforts would be branded as the embellishments of preachers. How far and different from that are the researches which men now carry in the niceties of dialectics and argumentation! The poet was right when he said:

> Many are the roads, but truth is a single path,
> And those who tread this way are few;
> They pass unrecognized, their goal unknown,
> While slowly and steadily they press along.
> Men do not know for what they were created,
> And most of them fail to see the path of truth.

In short, most men incline toward the line of least resistance and pursue what is most agreeable to their nature, because truth is better, its discovery difficult, its attainment hard, and its road rough, especially as it pertains to the knowledge of the qualities of the heart and to its purification from blameworthy traits. It is a continual

source of torment to the spirit; he who pursues it is like the person who takes his medicine and bears its bitterness in the hope of being cured, or like the man who fasts throughout his life and suffers all the rigors involved in order to enjoy breaking his fast after death. Yet when was this path ever popular or attractive? For this reason there were in al-Basrah one hundred and twenty speakers engaged in preaching and warning, but of those engaged in the science of religion (*'ilm al yaqin*), the study of the states of the heart and the qualities of the inner self, there were only six,[1] among whom were al-Tustari, al-Subayhi,[2] and 'Abd-al Rahim.[3] To the former there always flocked a great and numberless crowd, while to the latter only a small group which seldom exceeded ten usually came. Valuable and precious things are not fit except for the elite, and what is placed at the disposal of the mob is cheap.

Another characteristic of the learned man is that he should rely in his studies on his insight and understanding which enlighten his heart, rather than on manuscripts and books, or the blind acceptance of what he hears from others. Only the lawgiver, in what he has ordered and said and the Companions, whose deeds testify that they received their knowledge from the Prophet, should be emulated. Then when the lawgiver is emulated through the acceptance of his words and deeds, care should be taken to understand their significance (*sirr*). The follower performs an act simply because the lawgiver did it. But the lawgiver did not perform the act except for some particular significance inherent in it. For this reason the follower should diligently endeavour to determine the significance of those deeds and words, because if he is satisfied with the mere retention of what he hears he is a vessel of information and not a learned man. For this reason it was customary to describe a person who was given to the mere retention of information in his memory, without ever trying to

1. Six in B, three in other copies.
2. Unidentified.
3. 'Abd-al-Rahman according to B: unidentified. Al-Ghazzali took these names, just as he had taken a great deal of the contents of the *Ihya'* from the *Qut-al-Qutub* of Abu-Talib al-Makki. see *Qut-al-Qutub* (Cairo, 1351), Vol. II, p. 32.

familiarize himself with its significance and wisdom, as one of the vessels of information. But he who would remove the veil from his heart and would allow it to be flooded with the light of guidance would himself become a leader to be emulated, and therefore should not blindly follow the example of others. With this in mind ibn-'Abbas said, "There is no one except the Prophet whose knowledge is not sometimes followed and sometimes rejected." Thus although ibn-'Abbas had received his knowledge of jurisprudence from Zayd ibn-Thabit and had studied the Qur'an reading at the feet of Ubayy ibn-K'ab,[1] he later contradicted both in jurisprudence and Qur'an reading, respectively.

One of the Fathers said, "Whatever is handed down to us on the authority of the Apostle of God we accept willingly, but what we receive on the authority of the Companions we may accept and we may reject. It is, however, a different story when we consider what we receive from the followers (*al-tabi'un*), because they were men like ourselves. The superiority of the Companions lie in the fact that they witnessed the circumstances under which the Prophet had lived, and their hearts were endued with the means of perception. Consequently their first hand knowledge of these circumstances and their ability to perceive and understand led them to that which is right in a manner beyond description. The light of prophecy shone upon them to a degree sufficient to guard them, for the most part, from error.

Furthermore if dependence on heresay is unsatisfactory imitation, dependence on books and compositions are worse, because they are a recent novelty, none of which existed during the time of the Companions and the early days of the followers (*al-tabi'un*). These books were all composed after the year 120 of the Hijrah (A.D. 738) after the death of all the Companions and most of the followers, and after the passing away of Sa'id ibn-al-Musayyab (A.H. 94/A.D.

1. Famous Qur'an reader (ca. A.H. 32/A.D. 652-3). See ibn-Qutayba pp. 131-2; *al-Fihrist*, p. 27, Shams-al-Din al-Jazari, *Ghayat al-Nihayah fi Tabaqat al-Qurra'*, ed. Gotthelf Bergstrasser (Cairo, 1933); Vol. I, pp. 31-2.

713), al-Hasan al-Basri (A.H. 110/A.D. 728), and the most illustrious of the followers. In fact, the early Muslims disliked books of traditions and disdained composition for fear that people would become dependent on those works and thereby neglect to commit their contents to memory and fail to read the Qur'an, meditate over its meaning and remember its commands. On the contrary they said, "Commit to memory as we have committed." For the same reason Abu-Bakr as well as several of the Companions disliked the idea of committing the Qur'an in writing in the form of a book saying, "How shall we do what the Prophets did not do?" Fearing the dependence of the people on the written copies of the Qur'an, the Companions first decided to leave the Qur'an uncommitted to writing and have the people learn it from one another through oral transmission so that they might have no other worry or concern. Later, however, Hadrat 'Umar and the other Companions, apprehensive of human weakness and laziness and fearful that disagreements concerning a word or an ambiguous (*mutashabih*) reading might arise, and having no authoritative origin to consult, advised that it should be committed to writing. Thereupon Abu-Bakr gave his consent and had the Qur'an collected into one volume. Nevertheless, Ahmad ibn-Hanbal was critical of Malik for compiling *al-Muwatta'* and used to say, "He originated an innovation by doing what the Companions did not do."

It has been said that the first person in Islam ever to compose anything was ibn-Jurayj[1] who wrote a book on history (*al-athar*) and the dialects of Qur'an (*huruf al-tafasir*) which he based on what he had heard from Mujahid,[2] 'Ata, and the companion of ibn-'Abbas at Makkah. Then came the work of Ma'mar ibn-Rashid al-San'ani[3] which was a compilation of traditions embodying the customs of the Prophet. This was followed by the *Muwatta'* of Malik and the *Jami'* (corpus) of Sufyan al-Thawri. During the fourth century (of the

1. Abu-a'-Walid 'Abd-al-Malik ibn-'Abi-al-'Aziz (A.H. 150/A.D. 767). See ibn-Qutaybah, p. 246; *al-Fihrist*, p. 216; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. 1, pp. 512-13.
2. Ibn-Jabr al-Makki al-Makhzumi (A.H. 101/A.D. 722-23). See *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. V, pp. 343-4.
3. A.H. 153/A.D. 770. See ibn-Qtaybah, p. 252; *al-Fihrist*, p. 94, *Tahdhib al-Asma'*, pp. 569-70.

Hijrah[1]), however, works on scholastic theology (*kalam*) appeared while people engaged more and more in argumentation and refutation. They developed a liking for debate and inclined to anecdotes and to their use in preaching. Consequently the science of religion (*'ilm al-yaqin*) began to disappear and the science of the heart, research into the qualities of the soul, and the study of the stratagem of the devil became rare and unknown. All but the very few ignored them. Then it became the custom to call the arguing scholastic and the story-teller, who embellished his words with rhymed prose, learned. This was primarily because laymen made up their audience, laymen who could not distinguish true knowledge from that which is false, while the acts of the Companions and their learning were concealed from them and, therefore, they were unable to refute these men with them. These men, as a result, continued to enjoy the title 'learned' and the inheriting of such appellatives went on. At the same time the science of the hereafter became forgotten, and the difference between knowledge and disputation no longer known except to a select few who were still able to say, whenever they were told that one person was more learned than another, that the former was more learned while the other was given to mere distinguishing between knowledge and the ability to dispute and argue. Thus did the science of religion wane during those early centuries; but how about its condition at the present time? Things have come to a point where anyone who would dare show his disapproval of the present state of affairs would run the risk of being called insane. It is therefore better for man to mind his own business and to hold his peace.

Another characteristic expected of the learned man is that he be extremely careful not to be swayed by novelties and innovations (*muhdathat*) despite the fact that all might agree to follow them, or be deceived by the universal acceptance gained by innovations which have sprung up since the days of the Companions. On the contrary he should be diligent in studying the conditions under which the Companions lived as well as their lives and works. He should find out to what most of them were given, whether they devoted themselves

1. A.D. 913-1010.

to teaching, writing, debate, law, government, guardianship of mortmain properties (*awqaf*), execution of wills (*wasaya*), devouring the substance of orphans, keeping the company of rulers, and currying favour with them or rather spent their lives in fear, sorrow (*huzn*), reflection (*tafakkur*), self-mortification, observation of the outward conduct and the inner self, abstinence from both minor and major sins, determination to ascertain the hidden appetites of the soul and the stratagem of the Devil and the like in the esoteric sciences.

You should know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the most learned people of the time and those who are closest to the truth are those who resemble the Companions the most and who are best acquainted with the way of the early Muslims, because it were they who transmitted to us our faith and religion. For this reason, to the charge that he had contradicted some one by his actions, Hadrat 'Ali replied, "The best of us are those who are most persistent in following this faith." Therefore no one should mind contradicting the people of his day when he agrees with contemporaries of the Apostle of God. Furthermore men are apt to rationalize whatever they may be doing because of an instinctive disposition to do that thing, and their flesh does not allow them to admit that therein lies their loss of Paradise. Consequently they claimed that there was no access to Paradise except in the doing of it. For this reason al-Hasan al-Basri, said, "Two innovations have appeared in Islam: A man of bad judgment who holds that Paradise will be the reward only for those who see eye to eye with him, and a man of luxury and extravagance who worships this world; it is the source of all his dissatisfactions and the fountainhead of all his pleasures; he seeks nothing besides. Reject, therefore, these two for they are doomed to Hell fire. The average man finds himself hounded by a sybarite who beckons him to the luxuries of this world on the one hand, and by a faddist (*sahib hawa*) who calls him to follow his whim on the other hand; but God has saved him from both. Aspiring to be like the righteous fathers he inquires about their deeds and follows in their footsteps, thus qualifying himself for a great reward. Be, therefore, likewise."

A tradition has been related on the authority of ibn-Mas'ud

with its chain of authorities going back to the Prophet (*musnad*), and according to another version stopping short of the Prophet (*mawquf*), that the Prophet said, "Of all things, two are best: the word (*kalam*) and faith (*huda*). The best word is the word of God (*kalam Allah*), and the best faith is the faith of the Apostle of God. And beware of innovations because of all things, they are the worst. And every innovation is a heresy, while every heresy is a sin. Verily the end will not be delayed lest you harden your hearts. Verily whatever was ordained is now impending, and whatever was not ordained will not occur."[1]

In the course of his sermon, the Apostle of God said, "Blessed is he whose concern for his own faults keeps him from meddling with the faults of others, lives on money which he obtained without sin, associates with the learned and the wise, and shuns the people of wickedness and vice. Blessed is he who humbles himself, whose nature has been refined and whose heart has been reformed, who avoids inflicting evil upon men. Blessed is he who acts in accordance with his knowledge, who gives away the surplus of his substance and who withholds whatever is superfluous when he speaks, who lives within the law and does not overstep its bounds by introducing innovations."

Ibn-Mas'ud used to say, "At the end of time good faith is better than much work." And again, "You are now in a time wherein the best among you is he who is quick in the execution of affairs, but you will come upon a time wherein the best will be the cautious and deliberative, because of the abundance of misleading things." Truly he spoke the truth because any one who does not at the present time stop and think, but follows the crowd and does what they have done, will perish as they have perished.

Hudhayfah said, "Strange as it may seem, accepted practices of today are the taboos of a day gone by, and the taboos of today are the accepted practices of a day yet to come. As long as you know the truth and your learned men belittle it not, you will continue to

1. *Ibn-Majah, Intro.*, 7:2.

prosper." Truly he spoke the truth, because most of the accepted practices of the present time were taboos during the days of the Companions. Thus among the accepted practices of our time are decorating and furnishing the mosques, and expending great sums of money on their ornate construction and fine rugs which were then considered innovations. These were introduced by the pilgrims, since the early Muslims seldom placed anything on the ground during prayer. Similarly disputation and debate are among the most honoured disciples of the day and are numbered among the best meritorious works (*qarubat*); nevertheless they were among the taboos at the time of the Companions. The same is true of the chanting (*talhin*) of the Qur'an and the call for prayer, going to excess in matters of cleanliness and being over fastidious in matters of ceremonial purity, ruling clothes unclean on petty and far-fetched grounds, and, at the same time, being lax in ruling foods lawful and unlawful as well as many other like things.

Ibn-Mas'ud said the truth when he declared, "You are now in a time wherein passion is harnessed by knowledge, but there will come a time wherein passion will have priority over knowledge." Ahmad ibn-Hanbal used to say, "They have discarded knowledge and followed strange things. How little is their learning! Verily God is our help." Malik ibn-Anas said, "In times gone by people were not in the habit of looking into things as they do nowadays, nor did the learned men ever say that such a thing was lawful (*halal*) and the other unlawful (*haram*). But I have heard them say that one thing was desirable (*mustahab*) and the other undesirable (*makruh*). In other words they used to consider the degree to which one thing was desirable and the other undesirable, while the question of unlawfulness never arose, because the sinfulness of the unlawful was evident and clear.

Hisham ibn-'Urwah[1] used to say, "Do not ask the people of this day what innovations they have originated, because they have prepared an answer for that; rather ask them concerning the usage of

1. Ibn-al-Zubayr (A.H. 146/A.D. 763). See ibn-Khallikan, Vol. III, pp. 132-4.

the Prophet for they are ignorant of it." It was also the custom of Abu-Sulayman al-Darani to say, "No one who had been inspired with something good should attempt to carry it out until he finds its confirmation in the traditions of the Companions. Let him then give praise unto God for He has approved his intentions." This he said, because every innovation, before its inception, strikes the ear and takes hold of the heart and cause it to deem error as truth. To conceal that, man summons the testimony of tradition to his aid. For this reason, when Marwan[1] introduced the pulpit (*minbar*) into the sanctuary (*al-musalla*)[2] at the time of the feast service,[3] Abu Sa'id al-Khudri[4] approached him saying, "O Marwan! What is this innovation?" Marwan replied, "This is not an innovation. On the contrary this is better than the practice you advocate because the crowd has become very big, and I desire to have my voice reach all of them." But Abu-Sa'id objected saying, "By Allah you will never do anything better than the things I know and advocate. By Allah I shall not follow you in prayer today." Abu-Sa'id disapproved of the action of Marwan because the Apostle of God used to lean, during the sermon of the feast and the prayer for rain (*al-istisqa*), against a bow or a cane but not against a pulpit.[5] Thus we read in the famous tradition, "Whoever will introduce an alien element into our religion, the same is an evil man."[6] In another tradition we have, "The execration of God and all the angels is upon him who will deceive my people." It was then asked, "O Apostle of God! Who will deceive

1. Fourth Umayyad caliph (A.H. 64-5/A.D. 683-5).
2. A place of prayer outside the town and mainly in cemeteries. Following the Prophet it was customary to hold the service of the two feasts (*al-idayn*), namely al-Fitr and al-Adha, in such *musallas*. See *al-Bukhari*, al-'idayn: 6.
3. Either *al-Fitr or al-Adha*. The pulpit, as a part of the equipment of the mosque goes back to Muhammad (S.A.W.) himself who raised such a pulpit in A.H. 7/A.D. 628-9; see *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. II, Pt. 2, pp. 9-13. For the innovation of Marwan, see *al-Bukhari*, al-'idayn: 6.
4. Sa'd iibn-Malik ibn-Sinan (A.H. 74/A.D. 693-4). See ibn-Qutaybah p. 136; *Tahdhib al-Asma'*, pp. 723-4.
5. *Cf. al-Bukhari, Istisqa'*: 1, 7, 18; *Muslim, Istisqa'*: 1-3: *abu-Dawud, istisqa'*: 7; *ibn-Majah*, Salah, 86:5.
6. *Cf. abu-Dawud, al-Sunnah*: 5.

your people?" The Apostle replied, "He who will introduce an innovation and will lead men to follow it."[1] The Apostle also said, "Verily God had an angel who cries out daily saying, 'He who violates the *sunnah* of the Apostle of God will not enjoy the benefit of his intercession'."[2] The relation of him who transgresses against religion by introducing into it innovations contrary to the *sunnah* to him who commits an offence is like that of him who rebels against the king and attempts to destroy his government to him who disobeys the sovereign in one particular service. The offence of the latter may be pardoned but not that of the former.

One of the learned men said, "To ignore what the Fathers have discussed is insolence, and to discuss what they have ignored is ostentatious." Another learned man said, "Truth is not a light matter: He who oversteps its bounds, transgresses; he who falls short of it, fails; and he who aligns himself with it, is satisfied." The Prophet said, "Follow the middle position to which the high is levelled down and the low is levelled up." Ibn-'Abbas said, "Error is sweet to the hearts of its followers."

God said, "Quit those who make their religion a sport and a pastime."[3] And again, "Shall he, the evil of whose deeds are so tricked out to him that he deemeth them good, be treated like him who seeth things aright?[4] Thus everything which has been introduced since the time of the Companions, beyond the demands of need or necessity, is nothing but sport and pastime

It has been related that the Devil (*Iblis*)[5] sent his soldiers out at the time of the Companions, but they returned to him distressed. Thereupon he asked them what the matter was, to which they replied, "We have never seen the like of these men; we cannot make any headway against them and they have worn us out." The Devil then said, "Verily you will not be able to overcome them, because they accompanied their Prophet and witnessed the revelation of their God. But there will come after them another group against whom you will

1. Unidentified.
2. Unidentified.
3. *Surah*, VI: 69.
4. *Surah*, XXXV: 9.
5. From Gr. Six Boyos.

prevail." When the followers (*al-tabi 'un*) came along the Devil sent his soldiers out again among them, but they returned to him disappointed and said, "We have not seen anybody more amazing than these men. We trap them into one sin after another but at the end of the day they begin to beseech the forgiveness of God and He answers their prayers and changes theirs sins into good works." The Devil replied, "You will never prevail over these men because of the integrity of their belief in the unity of God and their obedience to the *sunnah* of their Prophet. But after them will come others who will delight your hearts. You will play with them as you wish, and will lead them by the reins of their passions as you please. If they will ask for forgiveness of God He will not grant their request; nor will they repent so that God might change their sins into good works."

And so after the first century (of the *Hijrah*) there came another group of men among whom the Devil kindled passions, and so tricked out to them their innovations that they deemed them lawful, and set them up as their religion. They neither asked the forgiveness of God nor repented from their sins. Consequently their enemies prevailed over them and led them anywhere they desired.

The question may be asked, how did the person who related this know what the Devil had said especially since no one has seen the Devil or talked with him? Then you shall know that those whose hearts have been sanctified have the secrets of heaven made known to them either by inspiration (*ilham*) which dawns upon them from where they know not, or by actual vision (*al-ru'ya al-sadiqah*) in their sleep, or in their wakefulness, which unfolds to them the mysteries through the contemplation of types (*amthilah*), just as in sleep. This is the highest rank, and is one of the high ranks of prophecy, just as actual vision is one part of forty-six parts of prophecy.

Beware, therefore, lest your share of this knowledge be the denial of whatever falls beyond the limits of your own finite mind, because therein the proud and boastful learned men who claim that they have encompassed all intellectual knowledge have met their

doom. In fact ignorance is better than a mind which calls for the denial of such things to the saints of God. For he who denies the saints such things is of necessity compelled to deny and reject the Prophets, and will, therefore, be completely outside the pale of religion. In this connexion one of the gnostics (*'arifun*) said, "Verily the *abdal* have vanished from the earth and have concealed themselves from the world, because they cannot stand the sight of the learned men of the time who in the opinion of the *abdal* are ignorant of God, but in their own opinion and in the opinion of the ignorant are deemed learned."

Sahl al-Tustari said, "Indeed one of the greatest sins is to be unaware of ignorance." To watch the life of the crowd and hear the words of the foolish are easier (to the *abdal* than all the babel of the so-called learned.

Furthermore no words of any learned man who has pursued this world should be heeded; on the contrary whatever such a man would say should be questioned, because every man would pursue what appeals to him and would reject whatever does not agree with his desire. For this reason God said, "Obey not the man whose heart We have made careless of the remembrance of Us, who followeth his lusts, and whose ways are unbridled."[1] The trespassing laymen are happier than those who are ignorant of the path of religion but believe that they are learned. For the trespassing layman admits his shortcomings, asks Allah for His forgiveness, and repents of his sins, while the ignorant man who regards himself learned addresses himself to those branches of knowledge which will serve him as means whereby he will be able to gain this world through the path of religion. He neither repents of his sin nor asks the forgiveness of Allah, rather he persists in his sin until death. And since that prevails on most men, except those who have been rendered infallible by God, so that all hope of reforming them has disappeared, the safest thing for the cautious man of religion is to seek seclusion (*'uzlah*) and solitude (*infirad*). This will be discussed in the Book on Seclusion. For this reason Yusuf ibn-Asbat wrcte to Hudhayfah al-Mar'ashi,[1]

1. *Surah*, XVIII: 27.

"What do you think of one who has not yet been able to find anyone to join with him in the praise of God who is not a criminal and companionship with him is sin?" In others words Yusuf ibn-Abas was not able to find any congenial company; and he was right, because the company of people is never free of backbiting and gossip or the necessity of overlooking evil. The best that the learned man can do is either to benefit others by his knowledge or to benefit himself by the knowledge of others. Had this poor man but realized that it was not possible for him to impart any benefit without its being tainted with the blemishes of hypocrisy and the dèsire of wealth and position, he would have known that the receiver of his benefit is bent on making it a means for gaining this world and an instrument for evil. In that case he would be his aid and accomplice, an auxiliary who would provide him with his tools and instruments. He would be like the merchant who would supply the brigands with their swords. For knowledge is like the sword, its proper use is in the service of good as the proper use of the sword is in the execution of raids (*ghazw*). Consequently no merchant is justified in selling his swords to men from whose conditions he can tell that they will employ his merchandise to carry out their highway robberies.

These, then, are twelve of the characteristics of the learned men of the hereafter, each one of which represents several of the qualities of the early learned men. Be, therefore, one of two things: either a man who possesses these qualities, or a man who, while acknowledging them admits his failure to live up to them. But never be the third: one of neither possesses these qualities nor admits his failure. Otherwise you will confuse yourself and regard religion only as a means of securing the luxuries of this world, and will liken the lives of the wicked to those of the versatile learned men. Your ignorance and rebellion will land you into the midst of those who are doomed to destruction and despair. We seek refuge in God against the deceit of Satan through which many have perished, and we ask to God to vouchsafe that we become one of those who are not deceived by this world, nor moved to deny God because of their conceit.

1. A.H. 207/A.D. 822; see al-Sha'rani, Vol. I, p. 53.

SECTION VII

On the Intellect, its Noble Nature, its Definition, and its Divisions

The Noble Nature of the Intellect: It will be superfluous to show the noble nature of the intellect (*al-'aql*) especially because through it the noble nature of knowledge has been revealed. Intellect is the source and fountainhead of knowledge as well as its foundation. Knowledge springs from it as the fruit from the tree and the light from the sun and vision from the eye. How then could that which is the means of happiness in this world and the next not be noble or how could it ever be doubted? The beasts, despite their weak understanding, respect the intellect, so that the largest; most ferocious, and strongest among them, fear the very sight of man, because they sense his superiority over them, which is the result of his native resourcefulness. For this reason the Prophet said, "The position of the chief (*shaykh*) in his tribal organisation is like unto that of the Prophet among his people."[1] This however, is not because of the abundant wealth of the *shaykh*, nor because of his great person, or his enormous power, but rather because of his rich experience, which is the fruit of his intellect (*'aql*). For this reason you find that the Turks and the Kurds as well as the ruffians among the Arabs and all other people, despite the fact that they are so close in their lives to the beasts, respect their *shaykhs* instinctively. Similarly, when several of the rebellious Arabs, who had made up their minds to kill the Prophet, saw him and beheld his noble countenance, they feared him, and there shone on them through his face the radiant light of prophecy, although it was only latent in his soul in the same manner as the intellect.

1. Unidentified.

To be sure the noble nature of the intellect is perceived instinctively. It is our purpose, however, to relate what the tradition and the Qur'an say concerning its noble nature. Thus we find in the Qur'an that Allah called it light when He said, "Allahis the Light of the Heavens and Earth. His Light is like a niche in which is a lamp — the lamp encased in glass — the glass, as it were, a glistening star."[1] The knowledge derived therefrom was called a spirit, a revelation, and a life. Said Allah, "Thus have We sent the Spirit to thee with a revelation, by Our command."[2] And again, "Shall the dead, whom We have quickened, and for whom We have ordained a light whereby he may walk among men, be like him, whose likeness is in the darkness, whence he will not come forth?"[3] Furthermore, whenever Allah mentions light and darkness He means thereby knowledge and ignorance respectively, as is evident in His words, "And He will bring them out of the darkness into the light."[4]

The Prophet said, "O ye men! Know Allah and be ruled by intellect, then ye will know what ye have been enjoined and ye have been forbidden. Know ye that intellect is your glory before Allah. He who obeyeth Allah, although his looks may be ugly, his rank lowly, his station modest, and his appearance shabby, is intelligent; but he who disobeyeth Allah, although his looks may be good, his rank exalted, his station noble, his appearance fair, and his power of speech sharp and fluent, the same is ignorant. For the apes and the pigs are, in the sight of God, saner than he who disobeyeth. Therefore be not deceived by the honour which the men of this world receive: verily they are of those who are doomed."[5] The Prophet also said, "The first thing which Allah created was the intellect. On creating it Allah ordered it saying, 'Come forth', and it came forth. He then ordered it saying, 'Return', and it returned. Thereupon Allah said, 'By My power and glory I have created nothing more reverent towards Me than thee. Through thee I take and through thee I give, through thee I reward and through thee I punish".

1. *Surah* XXIV: 35.
2. *Surah* XLII: 52.
3. *Surah* VI: 122.
4. *Surah* V: 18.
5. Unidentified.

You may ask, if this intellect is an accident (*'arad*), how could it have been created before all other substances, and if it is an essence (*jawhar*), how could it be a self-existent (*qa'im binafsih*) essence and not be isolated? If you should ask such a question, then you should know that it belongs to the science of revelation (*'ilm al-mukashafah*), and, therefore, it is not proper to discuss it under the science of practical religion (*'ilm al-mu'amalah*) which is our present concern.

It has been related on the authority of Hadrat Anas that a group of people once commended a certain man in the presence of the Prophet and praised hm excessively. Thereupon the Prophet said, "What kind of an intellect hath that man?" But they replied saying, "We tell these about his diligence in prayer and about the various good works he doeth and thou inquirest from us concerning his intellect!" The Prophet answered and said. "The fool doeth more harm through his ignorance than doeth the wicked through his wickedness. Moreover, men will not advance to a higher degree of proximity to God except in proportion to their intellect."

It has also been related on the authority of Hadrat 'Umar that the Apostle of Allah said, "Man doth not gain anything like a worthy intellect which leadeth him to righteousness and dissuadeth him from sin; nor doth his belief become complete and his religion upright until his intellect matureth." And again, "Verily man will attain the rank of the fasting worshipper through his good character; but no man will be blessed with good character until his intellect matureth. Then and only then will his belief become complete, and not until then will he obey Allah and disobey the Devil."

It was also related on the authority of Hadrat Abu-Sa'id al-Khudri that the Apostle of Allah said, "For everything there is a support, and the support of the believer is his intellect; in proportion to his intellect will his worship be." For have you not heard the words of the sinners in Hell: "Had we but hearkened or understood, we would not have been among the dwellers of the flames."[1] It has also been related on the authority of Hadrat 'Umar that he himself once

1 *Surah*, LXVII: 10.

asked Tamim al-Dari[2] saying, "What holds the supreme authority among you?" Tamim replied, "The intellect." Thereupon 'Umar said, "Thou hast said the truth. I have asked the Apostle of God the same question and he gave me the same reply saying. "I have asked Gabriel what the supreme authority was and he answered, 'The intellect'."

It was also related on the authority of Al-Bara' ibn-Azib[3] that once upon a time the questions which were submitted to the Apostle became too many, and thereupon he said, "O men! For everything there is a mainstay, and the mainstay of man is his intellect. The most convincing and the most authoritative among you is he who has the best intellect." It was also related on the authority of Hadrat Abu-Hurayrah that when the Apostle of Allah returned from the raid of Uhud he heard the people say that so and so was braver than so and so, and so and so fought better than so and so, and so on. Thereupon he said, "Ye have not knowledge concerning thing." "How, O Apostle of Allah?" they inquired. He replied, "Verily they have fought, each according to the intellect which Allah hath given him. Their victory and hope were also proportional to their intellect. Consequently those of them who were injured in the fray were injured at various stages (*manazil*), and on the day of resurrection they will occupy those stages, each according to his intentions and intellect."

It was also related on the authority of Al-Bara' ibn-'Azib that the Prophet said, "The angels have been earnest and diligent in their obedience to Allah wholly through their intellect; while the believers among the children of Adam have endeavoured to do His will as far as their intellect has allowed. Consequently the most obedient among them possesses the greatest intellect." Again it was reported on the authority of Hadrat 'A'ishah that she once said, "O Apostle of Allah! Wherein do people excel one another in this world?" He replied, "In

2. A.H.40/A.D. 660-61. See ibn-qutaybah, p. 149; *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, pp. 129-30; al-Suyuti, *Husn al-Muhadarah fi-Akhbar Misr w-al-Qahirah* (Cairo, 1327), Vol. I, pp. 76-7.
3. A.H. 72/A.D. 691-2. See ibn-Qutaybah, p. 166; *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. IV, Pt. 2, pp. 80-83.

intellect. And in the hereafter?" she added. "In intellect," he again replied. Then 'A'ishah said, "But are they not rewarded according to their works?" To which the Apostle replied: "O 'A'ishah! Have they ever achieved anything except in proportion to what God has given them of intellect? Their works will always be in proportion to the intellect which God has given them, and their reward will be in proportion to their works."

It was also related on the authority of ibn-'Abbas that the Apostle of Allah said, "For everything there is an instrument and a tool, and the instrument of the believer is his intellect: for everything there is a mainstay, and the mainstay of man is his intellect; for everything there is a support, and the support of religion is the intellect; for every group of men there is a goal, and the goal of the worshippers is the intellect; for every people there is a missionary (who calls them to the true faith), and the missionary of the devout is the intellect; for every merchant there are goods and merchandise, and the merchandise of the scholars is the intellect; for every house there is a keeper, and the keeper of the houses of the saints is the intellect; for every ruin there is rehabilitation, and the rehabilitation of death is the intellect; for every man there is an offspring who bears his name and perpetuates his memory, and the offsprings of the saints, who bear their names and perpetuate their memory, are their intellects; and finally for every journey there is a shelter, and the shelter of the believers is the intellect."

The Prophet also said, "Verily the believer who is most beloved of Allah is he who toils in the service of Allah and gives counsel to his people, whose understanding is complete; who admonishes himself and consequently sees the truth and acts accordingly all the days of his life, with the result that he himself prospers and leads others to success." And again, "The man who possesses the most mature mind among you is he who fears God most, fulfilling best what He enjoined and desisting from what He has forbidden, although that man may be the least willing to obey."

1. A.H. 72/A.D. 691-2. See ibn-Qutaybah, p. 166; *ibn-Sa'd*, Vol. IV, Pt. 2, pp. 80-83.

On the truth concerning the intellect and its divisions

Let it be known that people have disagreed on the definition of the intellect and the truth concerning it. Many have forgotten that the term has been applied to several things, a fact which has led to the existing disagreement concerning the definition of the term. The truth, however, is that the word intellect (*'aql*) is a term used interchangeably for four distinct meanings in the same way as the term for eye has been used for several meanings. In the case of such words, therefore, no one single definition should be expected to cover the several meanings of the term. On the contrary each meaning should have its individual definition.

First it is the quality which distinguishes man from the other animals and prepare him to understand and grasp the theoretical sciences (*nazariyah*), and master the abstract (*fikriyah*) disciplines. This is exactly what Al-Harith ibn-Asad al-Muhasibi meant when he said in defining the intellect (*'aql*) as an instinct (*gharizah*) through which the theoretical sciences are grasped and understood. It is as though it were a light cast into the heart preparing it thereby to grasp things and understand them. Hence he who denies this and limits the intellect to *daruriyah* knowledge only, is wrong because he who is unaware of the existence of these facts as well as he who is fast asleep, in so far as they possess that instinct, are called intelligent, although they lack the knowledge of these facts. And just as life is an instinct whereby the body is disposed to carry out the voluntary (*ikhtiyariyah*) movements and respond to sense perception (*idrakat hissiyah*), so is the intellect an instinct whereby some of the animals are disposed to grasp the theoretical sciences. Furthermore if it were conceivable to regard the donkey equal to man in instincts and sense perception and say that there was no difference between them except that God, just as a matter of course, imbued man with sciences with which He did not bless the donkey and the animals, it would also be conceivable to regard the inanimate objects equal to the donkey in life and say that there was no difference between them except that God, just as a matter of course, endowed the donkey with some particular

movements. But if the donkey were inanimate and lifeless, it would have been necessary to say that every movement which the donkey might perform must have been originated in it by God in that particular sequence. And just as it has been necessary to say that the donkey would not differ from inanimate objects in movement except for an instinct characteristic of it which is expressed by the word life; so would it be in the case of man in relation to the animal, he differs from it in his grasp of the theoretical sciences through an instinct which is expressed by the word intellect. This is just like the mirror which is distinguished from other objects by its ability to reflect images and colours through a particular quality peculiar of it, namely its polish. The same is true of the eye which is distinguished from the forehead in several qualities and characteristics which enable it to see. Hence the relation of that instinct, (namely, the intellect), to the sciences is similar to that of the eye to vision; while the relation of the Qur'an and the law to that instinct in so far as it leads to the unfolding of the sciences is like that of the light of the sun to seeing. In this manner, therefore, should this instinct be defined and understood.

Secondly the word *'aql* is applied to that knowledge which makes its appearance even in the infant who discerns the possibility of possible things (*ja'izat*) and the impossibility of impossible things (*mustahilat*), such as the knowledge that the two are greater than the one and that the one individual cannot be in two different places at the same time. It is what one of the scholastics meant when he defined the word *'aql* as some axiomatic (*daruriyah*) knowledge, such as the possibility of possible things and the impossibility of impossible things. This definition is right, as it stands, because this knowledge is existent and the application of the word *'aql* to it is clear. What is wrong, however, is to deny that instinct, and to hold that only this kind of knowledge exists.

In the third place the word *'aql* has been applied to that knowledge which is acquired through experience (empirical knowledge), in the course of events. Thus he who has been taught by experience and schooled by time is generally called intelligent ('aqil), while he who lacks these qualifications is called unintelligent, stupid

and ignorant. Here, therefore, is another type of knowledge which is called *'aql*.

In the fourth place the word *'aql* is used when the power of the instinct develops to such an extent that its owner will be able to tell what the end will be, and consequently be will conquer and subdue his appetite which hankers for immediate pleasure. Whenever such a power obtains, its owner, in view of the fact that he embarks upon an undertaking, or refrains from it only after a thorough consideration of its end rather than in answer to the urge of a carnal appetite, is called intelligent. This, too, is among the peculiarities which distinguish man from the other animals.

As to these four usages of the word *'aql* it should be pointed out that the first is the foundation of the other three, their origin and fountain-head. The second is the branch nearest to the first while the third is an offshoot of both the first and the second combined, since through the power of the instinct and axiomatic knowledge, are the empirical sciences acquired. The fourth is the final fruit and ultimate aim. The first two are native (*bi-al-tab'*), while the last two are acquired (*bi-al-iktisab*). For this reason Hadrat 'Ali said:

> Knowledge is of two kinds: native and acquired,
> But no acquired knowledge is of any use,
> If there is no native knowledge,
> Just as the light of the sun is useless
> When the light of the eyes is shut off.

The first, namely the native (*matbu'*), was intended by the Prophet when he sad, "Allah has not created a more honoured thing than the intellect (*'aql*)." The second, namely the acquired (*masmu'*), was intended by the Prophet when he said, "When men draw near unto Allah through nighteousness and good works, draw thou near unto Him through thy learning." The same is meant by the words of the Apostle of Allah when he said to Abu-al-Darda', "Increase in learning and thou wilt draw nearer unto God." Abu-al-Darda' exclaimed, "May my father and mother be thy ransom! How can I do that?" The Apostle replied, "Avoid the prohibitions of Allah and

fulfil His commandments and thou wilt be wise; do the good works and thou wilt increase in glory and honour in this world and wilt receive a place of favour and exaltation from thy Lord in the world to come."

It was also related on the authority of Hadrat Sa'id ibn-al-Musayyab that 'Umar, Ubayy ibn K'ab, and Abu-Hurayrah called one day on the Apostle of Allah and said, "O Apostle of Allah! Who is the most learned of men? He said, "The wise." "Who is the most worshipful of men?" they asked, "The wise," replied the Apostle. Again they said, "And who is the most excellent of men?" And again he replied. "The wise." Thereupon they said, "Is not the wise man he whose manliness is complete, whose eloquence is manifest, whose generosity is active, and whose rank is exalted?" The Apostle replied, "All these are of the things of this world while the hereafter is reserved by God for the pious who fear Him. Verily the wise man is he who is pious, although he may be abject and despised in this world." According to another tradition the Prophet said, "Verily the wise man is he who believes in Allah, accepts His Apostles, and obeys His commandments."

It is very likely that the basic use of the word *'aql* has been for that instinct, [native intellect], and the same is true of its technical use. It was, however, applied to knowledge because the latter is, as it were, its fruit, And just as a thing is known by its fruit so that, as a result, it is said, "The fear of Allah is knowledge," and "He who fears Allah is learned," because the fear of God is the fruit of knowledge, so has the word *'aql* been used metaphorically for other than that instinct, [native intellect]. It is not, however, our purpose to discuss language. All we mean is that these four parts exist and that the term *'aql* is applied to all of them alike. Furthermore there is no dispute regarding the existence of all but the first part, namely the instinct. There is no doubt, however, that it exists; in fact it is the origin of the other three while all the forms of knowledge, are as it were, inherent in it by nature and come to light when some cause which will bring them out takes place. Such is the case with knowledge that it would seem as though there was no external

influence whatever in its appearance: it merely was latent in that instinct and later appeared. This can be illustrated by the water in the bowels of the earth: it appears on digging and collects at the bottom of the well and can be distinguished by the senses; yet throughout the whole operation no new element was introduced. The same is true of the oil in almond nuts and the attar in rose petals. For this reason Allah said, "And when thy Lord brought forth their descendants from the reins of the sons of Adam and took them to witness against themselves, 'Am I not,' said He, 'your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we witness it'."[1] what is meant here is confession in their souls, not verbal profession, because men are divided in the case of verbal profession into two groups, believers and unbelievers. Consequently Allah said, "If you ask them who created them, they will be sure to say, 'Allah'." This means that if they would only consider their condition, their souls and hearts would subscribe to the fact that God had created them (in accordance with) "the nature (*fitrah*) which God has given them."[2] In other words every human being is created and born a believer; still more every human being is born with an inherent knowledge of reality; inherent since it is readily disposed to perceive reality. With belief installed by nature in the human soul, men have split, into two groups; the one has turned away from that belief and has forgotten all about it — it comprises the unbelievers; the other has pondered and remembered, resembling therein one who has a witness, and, in his oversight, for a while has forgotten all about it, but finally has remembered it. For this reason Allah said, "Haply they may remember;"[3] and "that those endued with understanding may recall and remember;"[4] and again, "And remember the favour of God upon you, and His covenant which He had covenanted with you;"[5] and again, "And we have rendered the Qur'an available as a sign to be remembered — but is there any one who will remember?"[6] It is not, therefore, far-fetched to call this kinds, remembrance (*tadhakkur*). Thus remembrance is of two kinds: the one is to recall a picture which once existed in one's mind but has since disappeared,

1. *Surah* VII: 171.
2. *Surah* XLIII: 87.
3. *Cf. Surah* XXX: 29.
4. *Surahs* II: 221, XIV: 30.
5. *Surah* XXXVIII: 28.
6. *Surah* V: 10.

while the other is to recall a picture which is inherent in one's mind by nature (*fitrah*).

These facts are evident to him who exercises his insight, but are abstruse to him who is given to blind imitation and simple acceptance of things on authority (*taqlid*) rather than to investigation and personal observation. Consequently you find such men entangled in these and similar verses, hopelessly lost in the interpretation of remembrance (*tadhakkur*) and the confession of the souls, and continually imagining that the traditions of the Prophet and the Qur'an are full of contradictions.[1] Such an attitude may take hold of him so that he will regard them with contempt, believing that they are utterly incoherent. He is like a blind man who enters a house and, stumbling over some vessels says, "Why were not these vessels removed from the way and returned to their places?" He is then told that they are in their right places and what is wrong is his sight. The same is true of the disorder of the insight; in fact it is worse because the soul is like the horseman while the body represents the horse, and the blindness of the horseman is more serious and disastrous than that of the horse. The relation between insight and sight is evident. Thus Allah said, "His heart falsified not what he saw,"[2] and again. "And thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the Heavens and of the Earth."[3] The opposite of both insight and sight has been called blindness. Thus Allah said, "For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts."[4] As to those things which were revealed to the prophets, some were revealed through the sight and some through the insight, but both were called seeing (*ru'ayh*). In short he whose insight is not keen will grasp nothing of religion except its husks and outward forms rather than its pith and truth. These, then are the things to which the word '*aql* is applied.

On the Intellectual Disparity among Men

Men have disagreed concerning the disparity which exists

1. *Surah* LIV: 17.
2. *Surah* LIII: II.
3. *Surah* VIL 75.
4. *Surah* XXII: 45.

among their intellects (*'aql*). But there is no use in repeating the arguments of those of little knowledge. It is more important to proceed immediately to the declaration of the truth. The obvious truth in this case is that this disparity pervades all the four parts of the intellect except the second, namely axiomatic (*daruri*) knowledge, such as the possibility of possible things and the impossibility of impossible things. Thus he who comprehends that two are greater than one will also comprehend the impossibility for one object being in two different places at the same time, or for a thing being both eternal (*qadim*) and originated (*hadith*). The same is true of all other similar facts and whatever is comprehended with certain comprehension free of any doubt. The three other parts, however, are subject to disparity.

As to the fourth, namely, the ability of the power of the instinct to conquer the appetite, the disparity in it among men is evident and clear; in fact it is evident and clear that, at times, even the individual betrays a certain degree of disparity therein. This is sometimes the result of variation in the intensity of different appetites. A wisemen may be able to overcome one appetite more readily than another; but the problem is not restricted to this only. The young man may fail to overcome the appetite of sex and desist from fornication, but when he advances in age and his understanding becomes mature he will be able to subdue his lust. On the other hand hypocrisy and pride increase and grow stronger with age.

This disparity may also be the result of difference in the mastery of the knowledge which reveals the evil of the other appetites. Thus a physician may be able to abstain from some of the harmful foods, while another man may fail simply because he lacks medical knowledge, although he may be the physician's peer in intellect and of the same belief in the harmful effects of those foods. Again the more mature the physician's intellect, the stronger will his fear be. Hence fear is an aid in the service of intellect, an instrument with which to overcome and break appetites. Similarly, the learned man is more capable of renouncing sin than the ignorant, because his knowledge of the evils of sin is greater. I mean the true learned men

and not those of the flowing robes who dote and rave and prate of things they know little about.

If this disparity is due to appetite it will have nothing to do with the disparity of intellect, but if it is due to knowledge, then we shall call this kind of knowledge, intellect, because it strengthens the native intellect and hence the disparity will be that of the particular knowledge then involved, after which it will also be named. It may also be caused by disparities in the native intelellect the ability of which to stamp out appetite becomes inevitably stronger as it grows more powerful.

As to the third part, namely, empirical knowledge (*'ulum al-tajarib*), the disparity of men in it cannot be denied. They differ therein in the number of times they are right in their quickness to comprehend. This may be the result of either disparity in the instinct, (i.e. native intellect), or disparity in practice and experience. In the case of the first, i.e. the instinct, which is the origin, the disparity cannot be denied. It is like a luminary which shines upon the soul, whose dawning and first rays begin to illuminate the soul at the age of discrimination and continues to grow and increase very gradually until it reaches its fullness around the age of forty. Or like the light of the morning, the beginnings of which are hard to discern but it increases little by little until it attains its fullness at the rising of the sun. The disparity of insight is like that of eye sight where the difference between the weak-sighted man and the keen-sighted is quite evident.

The law of God operates universally among all His creatures and follows the principles of gradual development. Thus the sex instinct does not appear at puberty all at one time suddenly; rather it appears little by little gradually. The same is true of all the other forces and facilities. In fact he who denies the disparity of men in this instinct is loose outside the confines of sanity, and he who thinks that the intellect of the Prophet is the same as that of any of the outlandish peasants and desert ruffians is himself filthier than any of those peasants.

Furthermore how could the disparity of instinct (i.e. the native intellect) be denied when without it men would not have varied in their ability to understand knowledge, nor would they have been divided into the stupid who fail to understand anything except after long and tedious explanation by a teacher, the brilliant who respond to the least sign, and the perfect from whose soul truth emanates without any previous instruction. Thus Allah said, "Whose oil would well nigh shine out, even though fire touched it not! It is light upon light."[1] Such are the Prophets to whom recondite things are clarified in their inward thoughts without having learnt or heard anything of the sort. This is expressed by the word inspiration (*ilham*). The Prophet expressed the same thing when he said, "Verily the holy spirit whispered into my heart and said, 'Love anyone, thou shalt part from him; live anyway thou desirest, thou shalt verily die; do anything thou wilt — thou shalt be accordingly rewarded'." This kind of imparting information by the angels to the Prophets is different from explicit revelation which involves hearing a definite voice with the ear and seeing the angel with the eye. Consequently the stage (of revelation) has been described as whispering into the heart (*al nafth fi al-ru*). As to the stages of revelation (*wahi*), they are many, but to embark on a discussion of them under practical religion (*'ilm al-muk ashafah*) is not fitting, because they fall under the science of revelation (*'ilm al-muk ashafah*). Do not think, however, that the knowledge of the stages of revelation requires that a person be himself a receiver of revelation, because it is not unlikely for a sick physician to know the different stages of health or for the trespassing learned man to know the various stages of justice despite the fact that he lacks justice. For knowledge is one thing and the existence of what is known is another. Consequently not everyone who knows what prophethood and sainthood are will be a Prophet or a saint, and not everyone who knows what piety and godliness are will be pious or godly.

That men are divided into those who take notice by themselves and understand those who do not understand except through warning

1 *Surah* XXIV: 35.

and instruction, and those who benefit from neither, is like the division of the bosom of the earth into parts where water collects and increases until it brusts out by itself into springs of living water, parts where water collects but cannot be reached without digging, and arid parts where not even digging will avail. This is true of the disparity of men in native intellect. Attesting to the disparity of the intellect is a tradition narrated by 'Abdullah ibn-Salam to the effect that the Prophet at the end of a long conversation, described the throne and stated that the angels once asked Allah saying, "O our Lord! Hast thou created aught greater than the throne?" Allah replied, "Yes, the intellect." The angels said, "How great is it?" Allah answered and said, "Verily no one can grasp its greatness. Can you number the sand of the sea?" They said, "No." Allah then replied, "Verily I have created the intellect in different kinds as numerous as the sand of the sea. Some men were given one grain, others two, three and four grains, still others received a good portion, others a portion equalling a camel-load, and others even greater."

You may say, "Why then do some groups among the *Sufis* disparage the intellect and reason as well as the rational and the reasonable?" You should know, then, that the reason for it is that men have transferred the term intellect or reason (*'aql*) and the term rational or reasonable (*ma'qul*) from their real and original meaning to another and false meaning, namely argumentation and debate over contradictions and requisites, which is scholastic theology. Consequently the *Sufis* could not tell that men have erred in this terminology, especially since it has not been possible to remove that from their minds in view of its current and well established usage. As a result they disparaged reason and rationalism. Could it be imagined, however, that the light of the insight, through which God is known and the truthfulness of His Apostle is recognized, will ever be disparaged or belittled when God Himself praised it? And if it were ever disparaged what other thing could be praised? But if the praiseworthy knowledge be the law, by what is its truth known? If it were known through the blameworthy and unreliable intellect, then the law itself is blameworthy. No attention, however, is paid to him

who says that the law is known through certainty itself (*'ayn al-yaqin*) and the light of belief rather than through intellect, because we mean by intellect what he means by certain sight and the light of belief, namely the inner characteristics by which man is distinguished from the animal and through which he comprehends reality. Most of these wild errors have arisen from the ignorance of some who sought realities in words and erred wildly therein, because of the confusion which exists in the technical terminologies of men.

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